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THE VICTORY OF MARY CHRISTOPHER



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HARVEY REEVES CALKINS



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THE VICTORY OF MARY CHRISTOPHER

A STORY OF TO-MORROW

BY

HARVEY REEVES CALKINS, A. M., B. D., 1866-

MINISTER OF THE GRANT ROAD METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BOMBAY

CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & PYE
NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS

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At the present rate of progress, a millennium would not suffice to prepare the way for the great millennial reign to which we all look forward with such ardent hope. It is a striking comment on the feeble faith and limited vision of present-day Christians to note how most of them start as if in alarm at the mere mention of an early ingathering of millions of redeemed men and women. . . . There is little or no fear of attempting too much, while there is constant danger of our contracting the spiritual paralysis which so often results from attempting too little.—JAMES M. THOBURN.

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A WORD BEFORE

The cities are alike. The hair a little different worn, the garments draped to suit the sun—why call that odd which is only odd to us?—a darker flash to the eye, and a sprightlier accent to the tongue; but in all things else Bombay differs from Chicago not at all. I have wondered what is that particular genius which is the “city-sense.” I have felt it in the metropolitan centers of three continents, and everywhere the same. The cities are alike.

And in this more they are alike: the kingdom of God lives or languishes as Christian men give to it of their brain and blood and money.

But in this they differ as the day from dark: the atmosphere, the vital air that surrounds them. The plague is bitter in this city of “the palm and the sea,” in Bombay the beautiful, but more foul than the dread poisons of the air is the stench of moral death: a death that will not be buried, but walks in all the streets with the rottenness of the grave dropping putrid. No man knows the meaning of Christian until he has breathed for a year in the midst of the uncanny shadows of heathenism.

Chicago, New York, London—their wickedness is colossal, but their very wickedness is because of their

vital goodness, their conscious capacity for righteousness. Wicked they are, but not reprobate. But how shall I make you know the deep darkness of the men who sit in these shadows? Can hunger be painted after it is grown tired with famine? Can one describe wind and confusion? Or picture the lack-luster of the mind that never knew, and that does not know it does not know?

And how shall I make you understand what they mean by the "open door?" When John R. Mott spoke the other day at Framji Cowasji Hall, hundreds of students were gathered from the university and the schools. As I moved among the crowds who listened and looked, but answered not, there were printed handbills stealthily passed from seat to seat. I found one (English, of course); it read:

"VICTORY FOR HIND!"

DO NOT LET THEM TURN YOU FROM THE FAITH
OF THE VEDAS!

Do not let them! When before did the disdainful Brahman ever become excited! A tremor of fear is passing through the hulk of this Hinduism. Islam only is our vital foe, and I could tell of wonders of the Lord which my eyes have seen this twelvemonth among Mussulmans with moral and intellectual girth to them.

I look beyond, and there is Japan, with its recent Pentecost, and China, and the Philippine Islands—an opportunity which is only for the now; and Africa laid open from Cairo to the Cape, like a ripened peach, ready—for what? And the old Catholic lands and their New World degenerate offspring in Mexico and South America, all spelling the one imperative word—NOW.

Then my eyes turn homeward, and I remember the colleges and the universities, which, with all their rich endowments, are still poor—an organized “hunger” clamoring to be fed; and I think, is any need greater than theirs? Then I see the cities with their vast necessities, and recall the days when in all the world nothing seemed to me so imperative as to redeem them from their wickedness. Perhaps a broader view of human need has come from seeing these packed lands of the East, but not even for India can I forget the claims of Christ at home—churches to be built and maintained, colleges to be endowed, the cities to be saved.

And from everywhere the call is “money!” I think it is overstressed, for character and will can be coined into gold of action to-day, any day. The Church, persecuted and poor, was richest then. But obedience is life, and because she is poor no longer, but rich and increased in goods, the Church must therefore consecrate her wealth or die. God seeks not ours, but us. Nor riches nor poverty God can use, but men.

And yet this is the day and hour of money, of vast enterprises of associated wealth, of world movements in finance, and of limitless expenditure in pursuit of science and pleasure. Churches and schools and books and—men! Are these less essential to the world movements of our day than are steel bridges and railways and scientific expeditions? Go to; shall Christian men not invest God's money in clear brains and pure hearts?

One hour ago a Mussulman convert sat in my house, clear-eyed, educated in the learning of the East, late the *moula* (prayer leader) of a mosque. Two months ago I baptized him. To-night he took my hand and said: "I will go where you send me, I will do what you bid me; you are my father and my mother; all my own have thrust me from them. And yet I count it joy for the love I have to Jesus Christ." O friends, why should the Church of God call men to such sacrifice as this—and it is but typical of what is common in all the mission fields—unless she is ready to be unto them as a nursing mother? Is she to have none of the sacrifice and they all?

To sit as I write and hear the tides of human life wash past my study walls; to remember they are all types of uncounted multitudes in these lands of sorrow; and to know—to know that they could be reached in masses and saved for God and righteousness, and saved now, if Christian men but cared enough to give their money or their life—what think you, my friend,

of that? When they say it is a sacrifice to become a missionary to the Christless peoples, they speak words that no man sent of God can understand; but to see the ripened grain of one's planting perish in the field for want of men and sickles to gather it and barns sufficient to garner it—O what sacrifice then is like his!

H. R. C.

"THE PARSONAGE,"

Grant Road, Bombay, Easter, 1902.

NOTE.—The writer of the following chapters desires to express his appreciation of the kindly manner in which they have been received. He is under obligation to the Board of Stewards of the Grant Road Methodist Episcopal Church—at whose request these chapters have appeared—for their wise and practical counsels; and to the editor of the *Bombay Guardian*, in which journal they were first published, for his unfailing courtesy and valuable suggestions.

PART I.
THE COMMAND.

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse.

P. 480

That Church alone is evangelical in which one member does not constrain another, does not force his light upon his brother, but waits in love and intercession till God reveals it by His spirit to the brother who is "otherwise minded."

—PASTOR STOCKMAYER.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTERRUPTED TEA.

"WELL, I wonder what next!" and Mary Christopher gave her umbrella an impatient snap as she stepped into the shade of the ivy-trellised veranda.

"A cup of tea, to be sure, and a quiet rest right here until dinner;" and, almost before she knew it, Mrs. Christopher was settling back into the cushions of an easy-chair and answering Amy Roberts's sympathetic glance with, "Two lumps, please, and no milk."

Somehow, Arthur and Amy Roberts had a way of making rough places smooth. They had been the most popular young people in the Church, and, after their marriage and Arthur's appointment as one of the stewards, they seemed to form a living link between the older and more conservative members and the fresh young life of the Church. Their pleasant home was a favorite meeting-place for all sorts of official and—mostly—unofficial Church committees. "It is n't because Roberts is so pious," one of the young men was saying to old Brother Saintly, "but he's so downright manly; religion with him is as natural as breathing." And Brother Saintly, who lived "in the heavenlies," replied, "Ah, my dear boy, Arthur has

learned the secret of the Resurrection; what you call 'manliness' St. Paul calls 'the mind of Christ;' and that is why we older ones never tire of sitting in the quietness of that gentle home."

"I hope there is no trouble," said Amy, when the vexed lines in her visitor's face began to disappear under the influence of the fragrant Coonoor.

"Trouble? trouble enough!" and Mrs. Christopher set her cup on the tray and began a vigorous fanning. "Were n't you at church yesterday morning?"

"Why, yes, of course, I was there," replied Amy, as she quietly refilled the emptied cup. "I am sure I would not have missed Mr. Randolph's sermon for a good deal; but what has that to do with any trouble?"

"Amy Roberts, do you mean to say that every Christian ought to give a tenth of his income to the work of the Church, as Mr. Randolph said? I have never been so vexed in all my life, especially when John said this morning he thought we ought to begin tithing. I would like to know any one who regularly gives the tenth."

"Why, dear Mrs. Christopher, Arthur and I have done so ever since our marriage, and I know of others who tithe."

"O it is all well enough for young married people, who have no children to clothe and educate, and who have no house-rent to pay! Wait till you know what trouble means, and then you'll not talk so glibly about giving a tenth."

Amy was silent for a moment before quietly saying, "You forget that our little home is not yet paid for, and that Arthur was out of a position for nearly a year after the bank failed, and surely"—Amy's lips trembled and two tears fell softly upon the tea-towel she was hemming—"surely you can not have forgotten my long sickness of last winter when little baby died."

"Forgive me, Amy dear," and in a moment Mrs. Christopher's vexation was melted into a woman's tender sympathy. "I had no right to speak so hastily, but I confess that since yesterday I have been unbearable. What with the rent, and the children's schooling, and Elsie's music, and a dozen extra trifles every day, it is all I can do to make both ends meet as it is; and now to have our pastor talk of giving a tenth, it puts me out of all patience! Goodness knows we are giving all we can, but would he take the clothes from our backs and the food from our children? I was beginning to like Mr. Randolph, but this is out of all reason."

"I am sure our pastor spoke with great tenderness when he mentioned those in difficult circumstances, and he specially dwelt upon God's faithfulness to those who obey him."

"Well, if he did, I'm sure I did not hear him! Why he actually said we were robbing God by not paying a tenth of our salary into the work of the Church! Do you call that tender?"

"Now, really," said Amy, with a mischievous glance,

"did Mr. Randolph say that himself, or was he quoting from the Prophet Malachi?"¹

"Well, it amounts to the same thing; and, any way, I do n't believe in preaching from those old Jewish prophets. We are not under the law, but under grace."

"Under grace!" and Amy looked up with a deep, holy light in her eyes; "surely, Mrs. Christopher, you do not mean that the coming of our dear Savior and his sacrifice upon the cross, and the gift of the blessed Comforter, are deserving of a less return on our part than that which the Old Testament law required of the Jews."

"O Amy, you know I did not mean that! I truly love the Savior, but— Goodness me! here comes Mr. Randolph himself, and dear old Brother Saintly is with him. Let me slip out through the side entrance, for I am afraid I'll say something to hurt him, and I truly would not for the world."

"You do not know Mr. Randolph very well, or you would not fear that. I'm sure he will be glad to hear the worst you can say. Arthur says it is only selfish people who get their feelings wounded, and that a true pastor is always helped and never hurt when his people tell him what they really feel; so do n't you stir a step!" and Amy shook a warning finger at Mrs. Christopher, as she turned to welcome the new arrivals.

¹ Mal. iii, 8, 9.

CHAPTER II.

THE MERCHANT'S PERPLEXITY.

"YOU'RE right welcome, both of you," said Amy, with a bright smile. "This is so good of you, Brother Saintly; here is your favorite chair all waiting for you; and Mr. Randolph, sit right here by Mrs. Christopher, who has 'a bone to pick' with you. Fresh tea will be here in just a minute."

"A bone to pick with me?" replied the young pastor, with a twinkle in his eyes. "I hope it will be as toothsome as the roast fowl and jelly that Elsie brought over to the parsonage this morning."

"Why, Mrs. Christopher!" exclaimed Amy, with a quick glance of pleasure, "I thought you were—"

"Upset! And so I am! I had to send that little trifle over to Mrs. Randolph, or I should have become fairly savage!" and Mrs. Christopher attempted to hide her confusion with a little forced laugh.

Randolph, with quiet tact, turned to speak to Amy, when he was interrupted with:

"I've known Mary Christopher, girl and woman, these many years," it was Brother Saintly who spoke with mildly beaming eyes, "and whenever she is passing through a temptation, she always brings the vic-

tory nearer by some little act of kindness. God give her victory to-day!"

"Amen!" Fervently the pastor spoke, and for a few moments there was silence in the little circle.

"I 'm ashamed to be so foolish," at last began Mrs. Christopher, "but I confess, Mr. Randolph, I was annoyed at the positive manner in which you spoke yesterday morning. Of course, we all know God required a tenth of the Jewish people, but I have always been led to believe that, when Christ came, the old ceremonial law was done away. So, when you spoke with such conviction and told us that God still expected at least a tenth from all believers, you can imagine how ruffled I was! Truly, Mr. Randolph, I want to do my whole Christian duty, as well as realize my full Christian privilege, but I can not follow the suggestions of any person, not even of my pastor; I must know the will of God for myself."

"And so you ought, and so you shall," replied Randolph warmly. "I would be untrue to my people if I did not point them to an authority greater than human opinions. But this meeting is truly providential. I met William Sprague a few minutes ago. He and Arthur were having a close discussion on this very point. Arthur invited us to continue it here, and Brother Sprague said he would stop to get his Bible. Here they come now, and still talking!"

Amy gracefully received the new comers. William Sprague seated himself beside Brother Saintly, and,

as Arthur Roberts familiarly took a vacant chair near his pastor—the two were near of an age and frequent comrades—the latter turned an affectionate look upon him, with, “Well, Arthur, how have you and Brother Sprague made out?”

“O finely! Brother Sprague agrees with me that the Israelites gave more for the maintenance of their faith—incredibly more—than the average Christian ever thinks of giving, in spite of all our easy talk about ‘the benefits of the Gospel.’ Why, the Jew gave regularly one-tenth of his income for the support of the priestly tribe of Levi,¹ another tenth for the maintenance of the various public feasts and sacrifices,² still another tenth, every third year, for the poor of the land³—though Brother Sprague thinks this was only an extension of the second tithe; then the Levites gave their own separate tithe”—with a mirth-provoking look at his pastor, who laughed a merry assent—“for the special priestly services of the tabernacle and the temple,⁴ so that no portion of the people were exempt. In addition to the tithes, there were stated services and feasts,⁵ and various personal sacrifices,⁶ full of rich teaching, and all entailing considerable expense, and to top the whole there were vows and free-will offerings⁷ *ad libitum* for personal and family blessing, for the building of the tabernacle⁸ and the

¹ Lev. xxvii, 30; Num. xviii, 20-24. ² Deut. xiv, 22-27. ³ Deut. xiv, 28, 29. ⁴ Num. xviii, 25-32. ⁵ Lev. xxiii, 2-38. ⁶ Lev. i-vii; vii, 37. ⁷ Num. xxix, 39. ⁸ Exod. xxxv, 21-30.

two beautiful temples,⁹ and for many other purposes, as fresh occasions arose for gratitude to God;¹⁰ so that, all told, the devout Jew easily gave a fourth or even a third of his income every year for the maintenance of the worship of God. And now"—Arthur arose to his feet with kindling enthusiasm—"and now, with the burning cross of Jesus ever before us, with His unmeasured sacrifice our inspiration, with uncounted millions of human souls perishing for the bread, which we alone can give them, we fall so insufferably below the Jews in the substantial tokens of our gratitude that I blush to make the comparison. We talk in a lofty manner of 'grace,' and sing 'Free from the law,' with the most amazing ignorance of what we mean. \ Salvation is free indeed, but verily it is not cheap!" and Arthur paused with an indignant flash in his eyes, while Mrs. Christopher moved uneasily in her chair.

If Randolph had obeyed his own feelings, he would have given Arthur a bear's hug on the spot, but he recognized the delicacy of his own position, and knew the embarrassment which his friend's vigorous speech had unwittingly caused, so he quietly remarked:

"The difficulty is that most Christians fall short in this matter, not because they are ungrateful or ungenerous, but because they have failed to recognize that God has commanded a definite proportion of

⁹ 1 Chron. xxix, 1-10; Ezra ii, 68, 69. ¹⁰ 1 Sam. i, 22-24; Judgs. vi, 18, 19, etc.

their income to be set apart for holy uses. Having thus no definite plan, they fall into a shiftless way of giving, which robs themselves of much blessing, and sadly weakens the Church of Christ."

"To think of the glorious Bride of Christ having to beg!" broke in Arthur. "She could be 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,'¹¹ instead of limping through the world, with a staff in one hand and hat in the other, asking for a little help! It fairly makes my—"

"Steady now, Arthur." William Sprague was speaking, a clear-eyed business man, founder of a great mercantile house, and president of the Board of Trustees—by far the most liberal giver in the Church. "Our pastor has correctly stated the situation. I confess with shame that I do not measure up to the old Jews in giving, no, nor even approach them. But I have never heretofore seen that Christ taught we should give with exactness. He said His words were 'spirit' and 'life,' and I have feared to get into bondage to any legal requirement. But I confess the sermon of yesterday morning has stirred me profoundly. In fact, the first thing I did to-day on going to the office was to instruct Jenkins, our head book-keeper, to open a new account, and to carry into it ten per cent of all my interests, both capital and profits. It shall be the Lord's tenth. I do this because your able argument has convinced me it is the minimum that a Chris-

¹¹ Cant. vi, 10.

tian ought to give. Of course, I do not thereby cut myself off from other gifts, as I may have opportunity, but I shall try the plan of systematic giving. For so much I desire to thank you, Brother Randolph, and for the clear-headed, business-like presentation you gave us yesterday. Nevertheless, while I do this gladly, yet I confess I do not even now see what relationship there is between Christian giving, in this dispensation of the Spirit, and the old Jewish law of 'the tithe.'"

"There is no relation whatsoever," said Randolph very earnestly.

"No relation!" exclaimed Mrs. Christopher. "Why I thought the stock argument of 'tithers' was that God commanded the Jews to give a tenth, and that therefore Christians were required to do so also."

"Not at all," returned the pastor. "The Bible shows clearly that God's law of 'the tithe' was known and followed many centuries before the Jewish people were in existence; the clear inference is that it was one of the primal commandments given to all men in the beginning, and, therefore, binding during all dispensations."

"I should like to see that proved," said William Sprague, with keen interest, "for it seems to me that right here is the very meat of the nut. The Jewish law of 'the tithe' is worthy of respect and veneration, without its having necessary binding force upon Christians. But if you can show a reasonable basis

for believing that God gave such a law in the beginning, then my difficulties are at an end."

"I think that can readily be done," said Randolph. "I see you have your Bible; you, Sister Amy, look on here with Mrs. Christopher; Arthur, you and I will take the family Bible, and Brother Saintly——"

"Never mind me, Brother, I've hid it in my heart these many years," and the old man closed his eyes as he repeated softly,

" 'Poor is our sacrifice, whose eyes
Are lighted from above;
We offer what we can not keep,
What we have ceased to love.' "

CHAPTER III.

THE VERANDA BIBLE CLUB.

"LET us turn first to the days of Abram," began Randolph, after a moment of quiet. "Mrs. Christopher, won't you please read in Genesis, the fourteenth chapter?" but Mrs. Christopher could not see the numerals because of two unshed tears that had gathered while Brother Saintly was speaking, so Randolph turned to William Sprague with, "Just tell us briefly the events recorded."

"Um——let us see," began the latter, glancing quickly through the chapter. "Abram is living in Hebron; Chedorlaomer and the confederate kings make war upon the king of Sodom and his associates; Sodom is taken; Lot, Abram's nephew is made a prisoner, and all his goods are carried off. Abram hears of his nephew's misfortune, arms his household, and bravely goes forth to meet the victorious Chedorlaomer, defeats him in battle and recovers Lot and all his possessions."

"Good!" said Randolph warmly, "then what?"

"The king of Sodom went out to welcome him on his return, and Melchizedek, King of Salem, also met him and 'brought forth bread and wine.'"

"Yes, Melchizedek," continued the pastor, "who was he?"

"'Priest of the Most High God,'" the merchant read the words reverently.

"'Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God,'"¹ quoted Brother Saintly softly.

"Yes," added Randolph, thoughtfully, "he is undoubtedly the most perfect Old Testament type of our blessed Lord. What significant act did he perform towards Abram? Read on, Brother Sprague."

"'He blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.'"

"Who would think such an exquisite prayer could have been uttered in those dark days!" mused Amy, whose spiritual insight was deep and true.

"Go on, Sprague!" cried Arthur, excitedly.

"'And he gave him tithes of all,'" William Sprague read slowly, as though taking in a new thought. There was silence for a moment, then Mrs. Christopher asked

"Could not this have been a simple act of charity?"

"Hardly charity!" replied Arthur quickly. Melchizedek was King of Salem, and doubtless a much richer man than Abram."

"Right, Arthur," said the pastor, "there is no sug-

¹ Heb. vii, 3.

gestion of 'charity.' It is an act of Divine worship, in which Melchizedek, as the priest of God, receives the tokens of Abram's gratitude. But the interesting question is, Why should Abram have given a tenth? Why not a seventh, or a fifth, or a fifteenth, or some other proportion? Why a tenth?" and Randolph looked keenly at William Sprague, who did not answer, but sat silently thinking.

"Remember," continued Randolph, "that this event in the life of Abram occurred only a short time after he came out from the heathen surroundings of Chaldea, and before the birth of Isaac. The Jewish law was not even announced until nearly five hundred years afterwards, and had no more relation to Abram's giving of tithes than had the American Declaration of Independence!"

"Let us try again. Mrs. Christopher, won't you please give us the events recorded in the twenty-eighth of Genesis? I think you'll find it a familiar story," and Mrs. Christopher received an encouraging glance from her pastor.

"Dear me!" began the latter, turning over the pages; "I'm not good at Bible history. Twenty-seven, twenty-eight—here it is! . . . It says something about Isaac blessing Jacob and sending him away; then something about Esau; then something else, and—O yes, I know! It's the story of Jacob's ladder!" Mrs. Christopher looked up with a bright face, and then continued:

"Jacob goes to sleep, with a stone for his pillow, and dreams about a ladder reaching up to heaven, and angels going up and down. Then God speaks to Jacob, and tells him He will be with him; and Jacob wakes up, and makes an altar out of the stones, and calls the place Bethel. Why, that's one of the Sunday-school stories!"

"Quite so," answered Randolph, smiling; "and what vow did Jacob make?"

"He vowed," continued Mrs. Christopher, now thoroughly interested, "that if God would be with him, and keep him, and bring him safe back to his father's house, the Lord should be his God, and Bethel should be God's house, and—and . . ."—

"O do read on!" said Amy, impetuously.

Mrs. Christopher read the closing words of the chapter in subdued tones, "And of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

"The tenth unto thee," repeated Randolph; "not unto the priestly tribe of Levi, for Levi was not yet born, and the laws of Sinai were nearly three centuries in the future; but unto God, directly, in sacrificial worship; for in the days of the patriarchs the head of the family was both priest and king to all the household. He meant that a tenth of all his substance, not occasionally, but during the coming years, should be devoted as a holy offering unto God."

"Well, if Abram's offering was not a gift of charity, I'm sure Jacob's was not," spoke Mrs. Christopher,

with so much energy that Brother Saintly beamed upon her over his glasses, and said, "You 're getting on, Sister Mary."

"To return to my former question," resumed Randolph, earnestly, "Why did Jacob give a tenth? and Abram? And when Moses codified the law for the Jews, why was a tenth required?"

"I think I see your drift," said William Sprague. "You mean there must have been a prior commandment of God, and that these are mere instances of what was generally known and practiced."

"Exactly! How else can you account for this uniform proportion? The very fact that it is spoken of in these instances, without further remark, is full proof that the giving of tithes was recognized as a religious obligation, and was frequently if not uniformly practiced. Moses formulated into a statute what had been handed down from father to son during many generations."

"I'm following you," said William Sprague, with quiet intensity; "go on."

CHAPTER IV.

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING.

"I HAVE a conviction," continued Randolph presently, "that the reason God received Abel's sacrifice, but rejected Cain's, is bound up in this very law of 'the tithe.'"

"I have long believed that, Brother Randolph; and I am glad to hear one of your scholarship suggest it," spoke the old man.

"Just notice here in the fourth of Genesis," continued the pastor, with an affectionate glance at Brother Saintly. "We read that Abel 'brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof'¹—or 'the fat ones thereof;' that is, he brought the best he had, and his offering to the Lord was in definite proportion to the whole number he possessed; he brought the 'firstlings.' (Now, look at Cain: we read that he 'brought of the fruit of the ground.' What sort of fruit? The first fruit?"

"O, any old fruit!" interrupted Arthur, sententiously.

"Why, Arthur Roberts!" cried Amy, in a scandalized voice; "how can you be so irreverent!"

"I know it is slang," replied Arthur, with an effort

¹ Gen. iv, 4.

to look penitent, which utterly failed; "but you remember that Professor Sinclair said, in his University Extension lecture last week, that our literature is indebted to English and American slang for some of its most piquant and forcible expressions; I really could not help interrupting our pastor with that bit of street patois. Please forgive me." But Amy said she did not think he was the least bit sorry, and looked at him with what was intended for a frown, but which instantly broke into a sunny smile.

"Well, I can not vouch for the professor's literary taste," said Randolph, laughing; "but I must confess that Arthur has exactly expressed what I was trying to say. Do you not see the reason for God's displeasure, though not formally spoken, is clearly implied? (A meat-offering, or an oblation of first-fruits, was an acceptable offering unto the Lord, and is beautifully suggestive of gratitude and thanksgiving. From the later Levitical law we know that such offerings always accompanied animal sacrifice.² The gifts of the two brothers were meant to supplement each other. Each brought an offering from the fruit of his own labors—one from the flock, the other from the field. Why then did God reject Cain's sacrifice, while he accepted the offering of Abel, his brother?) Arthur has expressed it with precision if not with elegance. Do you not see? Abel honored the Lord by selecting the choicest ones of his flock—the 'fat' ones;)

² Num. xv, 1-16.

moreover, he observed a Divine law by choosing them according to a certain order,—they were the ‘firstlings’ (and from the later law of Moses we learn that ‘the tithe’³ and ‘the firstling’⁴ were both included in the same covenant from time immemorial as ‘holy unto the Lord’). Now see Cain! Instead of bringing the choice products of the soil, and instead of observing the order of ‘first-fruits,’ he heaped together an indiscriminate collection and brought it as his offering unto the Lord, thereby insulting Jehovah and foreshadowing the miserable sin of the Jews in the days of Malachi,⁵ when they said, ‘The table of the Lord is contemptible!’”

“Yes!” All turned to Brother Saintly, for his usually placid tones had an indignant ring. (“Yes, and the sin of many Christians to-day who continue to insult Almighty God by offering him ‘what they can spare,’ instead of bringing their first and their best!”) Then leaning toward Mrs. Christopher, his voice broke into tenderness as he continued, “I forgot, Mary, you were in temptation; forgive me if my words seemed to you harsh.”

“There is no need of forgiveness, for I deserve the rebuke. But, really, I have sinned in ignorance, for I did not know the Word of God was so clear,” and Mrs. Christopher’s words were tinged with sadness.

“I fear we have all been ignorant in this matter, my sister,” said William Sprague. “Doubtless we are

³ Lev. xxvii, 30-32.

⁴ Lev. xxvii, 26.

⁵ Mal. i, 6-14.

to blame, for the Bible is a plain book if we will only study it. Nevertheless, I can not help thinking there should have been clearer teaching from the pulpit. We have been used to 'appeals' and 'subscriptions' almost without end;—no danger that ever we shall be allowed to forget the collection! But, until yesterday morning, I never heard a sermon that—without reference to any particular collection—clearly set forth God's law of giving; and I've been in the Church for over twenty years. It is beginning to dawn upon me that the giving of 'the tithe' is as clearly (one of the primal laws of God as is the keeping of 'The Sabbath.'")

"But I should think in that case," said Amy, who had been for some minutes in a brown study, "I should think that when Moses wrote down the Commandments he would in some way have referred to the older law, and also—"

"That is exactly what he did," interrupted Randolph, eagerly. "Just turn over to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, where the Ten Commandments are recorded. How does the fourth Commandment begin? 'Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.'⁶ It is not given as a new Commandment, for it was not new. Away back in Genesis we read that God rested on the seventh day and hallowed it.⁷ The Sabbath was holy from the beginning. Therefore, when, ages afterward, Moses prepared the statutes of the

⁶ Exod. xx, 8.

⁷ Gen. ii, 2, 3.

Lord, he wrote, 'Remember,' lest they should forget what they had learned from their fathers for many generations."

"Now, what is true of 'the Sabbath' is also true of 'the tithe.'" Every face was turned with keen interest towards John Randolph, as he unfolded to them the Scripture.

"Turn to the last chapter of Leviticus. You notice Moses is speaking of the 'paying of vows' unto the Lord. In the twenty-sixth verse we read that no man could vow a 'firstling' or 'first-born' unto the Lord, for the very simple reason, as we note in the last four words, that these already belonged to God, and could not therefore be dedicated as one's own. This reminds us of Abel's offering of the 'firstlings' in the beginning; you see he was rendering back unto the Lord only what belonged to him already. Now read verses thirty and thirty-two. Notice, the tenth of the produce of the land, both grain and fruit, and the tenth of the increase of the herd and of the flock (the Jews were not a commercial people at this time), these belonged to the Lord, were holy to him, and could not be dedicated to him by a vow,⁸ and this for the same reason that is named in the case of the 'firstling'—the tithe 'is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord.'"

"Now, pray remember," continued Randolph, with the enthusiasm of a true teacher, "this is the first

⁸ See Kell and Delitzsch, *In loco*.

reference to tithing in the law of Moses.) The Book of Exodus and the entire Book of Leviticus are filled with specific statutes and elaborate instructions regarding the moral and ceremonial law of the Jewish people, but 'the tithe' is not once mentioned. Only at the close of the second book, lest, in the midst of so many new statutes, the people should forget the ancient law of the beginning, Moses simply says: 'The tithe? No, it is not yours to dedicate; as of old, so now, it is the Lord's; touch it not; it is holy; yes, and it shall be holy unto the Lord.' Later, in the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, when the children of Israel had become a nation, further instructions are given as to the manner of collecting the tithe,⁹ and the uses to which it shall be devoted;¹⁰ but of the law itself the Israelite had no need of a new commandment. As for the 'Sabbath,' so also for the 'tithe,' the great law-giver of Israel has but one word: 'Remember—it IS holy.'"

⁹ Deut. xii, 6-11; xiv, 22 sqq.

¹⁰ Num. xviii, 20-32, etc.

CHAPTER V.

AMY ASKS TWO QUESTIONS.

THE westering sun looked upon a group of earnest faces as they waited for a moment in quietness after Randolph's glowing words had ceased. Brother Saintly's hand rested for a moment on Mary Christopher's bowed head. William Sprague had the look of a man who sees "the beginning of the enterprise."

He spoke with conviction, new-born. "I am getting hold of a new thought," he said. "Tithing is no more an arbitrary command than is a Sabbath-day of rest in every seven. I begin to apprehend that both have their beginning, not in the technical requirements of the ceremonial law, but in the very nature and design of God himself."

"My brother," said Randolph, with deep feeling, "God has no arbitrary laws. The entire revelation shows Him to be our Father. His commandments are not grievous. Why God should have ordained that a seventh of our days and a tenth of our means should be set apart as an holy offering, I do not know. It is one of those mysteries that lie deep hid in the Divine nature; but there is an earth side that lies

clearly within our view. It seems a very paradox. Seven is more than six, and ten is more than nine, and yet it is the unerring verdict of history and experience, from the days of the patriarchs and the later Jewish theocracy to this present hour, that, whenever and wherever men have been faithful to the revealed Word of God, they have been able to accomplish more work and better work in six days than in seven, and they have enjoyed greater prosperity with nine-tenths of their means than with the whole amount. Surely God's ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts."

Amy Roberts had been following the words of her pastor with close attention. She had that rare quality, which education does not always bring, the power of discriminating.

Presently she spoke. "There are two questions," she said, "which sometimes perplex me, and, although I am sure of God's will in the matter, nevertheless I am often puzzled."

"Very well, let us have them, one at a time, please," answered Randolph, who delighted in thus stirring up the fledgling thoughts of his people.

"I should think, then," began Amy, with her eyes thoughtfully resting upon her favorite lilac bush, "that if God gave such a law in the beginning, and it was meant for all men, there would be some knowledge of it outside the Bible and the Jewish people."

"Very well spoken, Mrs. Amy," said William

Sprague, with cordial good will. "I found the same question shaping in my own mind."

"Regarding the present heathen world," began the pastor thoughtfully, "it is difficult to speak. Whatever revelation may have originally been given has been so intermingled with superstition and error that few traces of it now remain. The offering of sacrifices, common to all heathen religions, suggests an early revelation to all men, and, in the more remote centuries, there is full proof that in different nations tithing was known and practiced as a religious obligation."

"Is that really a fact?" asked William Sprague, with much earnestness.

"It certainly is," replied Randolph. "If you will come to my study some day I will read you passages from several Greek and Latin authors, showing that, in both these heathen nations, tithes were often given in sacrifice. Pliny tells us that the Arabian spice merchants would sell nothing until they had first paid tithe to Sabis, their god of trade, and Plutarch——"

"O what a funk! That was—— I beg your pardon, Mr. Randolph," interrupted Arthur, with more warmth than courtesy.

"Not at all," replied the latter, with easy grace, for John Randolph's dignity was so truly a part of his own gracious manhood that he was not compelled to defend it by that heavy ordnance otherwise de-

scribed as "a ministerial bearing." "What about Plutarch?" he asked.

"Why, I was just thinking how stupid I was to forget dear old Whitey's lectures on 'Comparative Religions.' It was one of his strong arguments to quote Plutarch's references to this same custom among the Romans, who, after a successful battle, would frequently devote a tenth of the spoil as an offering to Hercules."

"Professor White knows where to mine for his gold," said Randolph, much pleased.

"Yes," spoke up Brother Saintly, with the animation of his early prime, "but George White need not go to Greece and Rome for his best proofs. When we remember that Abram had just come out of the idolatry of Chaldea, and, without further commandment, pays tithes to Melchizedek, God's high priest, it seems to me that the inference is perfectly clear that he was familiar in his father's house with this expression of worship. And if the Chaldeans in those early ages paid tithes, surely other nations also were not without this knowledge. The Bible is its own best interpreter."

Amy was beaming with delight. "O thank you, Brother Saintly," she said. "I'll let Mr. Randolph and Mr. Sprague study the hard books, but you have really given me the answer I most wanted."

"Capital! So much for the heathen! And now what is your second question? I hope it is n't a poser,

Sister Amy," said Randolph, as the little company waited for her to speak.

"Please do not think me foolish," began Amy modestly, "but, really, on so important and practical a matter I should think Jesus would have given some very definite commandments. Why is the subject of tithing not mentioned in the New Testament?"

"There, Mr. Randolph!" spoke Mrs. Christopher, with eagerness. Her bright eyes and suffused face showed how deeply she had been stirred. "It seems to me I have never learned so much Bible in all my life as during this past hour, and," with a little choke, "by God's help I shall not forget it. But Amy's question seems to me a most vital one. Why did not Jesus command tithing?"

Randolph answered with quiet earnestness, "Your question is most natural, and, in one form or another, has been asked many times. Before answering it directly, you must remember two things: first, the Bible is a continuous revelation—Jesus came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it;¹ and, second, our Lord's manner of teaching was by inculcating spiritual and general principles, rather than issuing specific commandments. One might just as truly say that Jesus taught nothing concerning human slavery, or the wicked traffic in strong drink, but His broad teaching of love towards our fellowmen has already banished the one, and, please God, will one day out-

¹ Matt. v, 17.

law the other. The Savior came not to give us law, but to give us life."

"And to give it 'more abundantly,' bless His dear name," broke in Brother Saintly.

"Moreover," continued Randolph, with a gentle inclination towards his aged friend, "there was no possible occasion for our Lord to add words to this ancient law of God, for the Jews were never so punctilious to keep the outward ordinances as after the Babylonian captivity, and especially during the time of our Lord. They regularly tithed their possessions, the Pharisees going so far as to tithe their mint, anise, and cummin—petty garden herbs—thinking thereby to increase their merit before God. Just turn for a moment to the Gospel of Matthew, twenty-third chapter, at the twenty-third verse. You see, Sister Christopher, how Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for neglecting judgment and mercy and faith, but in the same breath commends their fidelity in paying their tithes. His purpose at this time was not to teach tithing, but to rebuke hypocrisy; but do you not see how, incidentally, He adds His own divine sanction to the ancient law by saying, 'These [i. e., paying their tithes] ought ye to have done?' There was no more occasion," added Randolph whimsically, "for our Lord to teach tithing than there would be for me to entreat dear Brother Saintly not to get drunk, or to exhort our Trinity Church congregation to behave decorously during Divine worship."

"Why, yes," said Amy, slowly nodding her head, "I see that."

"Let us not forget, however, that tithing is not the Christian's ideal of giving," continued the pastor, with a tender light in his eyes. "The blessed Spirit soon brings the real disciple to recognize that all his substance belongs to God, and that he himself is but a steward. Both we and all our possible possessions have been bought with a price. We are his."

"All the more reason that we should pay our tithes with uncompromising integrity and regularity," spoke William Sprague, with incisive clearness.

"On what basis?" asked Arthur, keenly watching the merchant.

"On the same basis that I pay interest and rent," was the unexpected answer. "It is a well-defined principle of common law that the payment of rent or of interest constitutes an acknowledgment that I am using the property of another. And so, when I pay to God my tithe, it is a reverent acknowledgment that all I have belongs to him, that ten per cent of my income is a reasonable voucher thereto, and that he may have and dispose of the whole as seemeth to him good."

"Then you would make Christian stewardship more exact in the payment of tithes than ever Jewish legalism was?" said Arthur.

"Most certainly," answered the merchant, whose clear mind, having once recognized the validity of

a proposition, took in all its bearings at a glance. "Mr. Randolph has fully shown that tithing rests upon a Divine commandment older than either Christian or Jewish law, and," with kindling eyes, "is not the Cross of Calvary a clearer call to obedience than were the clouds and thunderings of Sinai?"

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES.

"Do you know," said Mrs. Christopher, breaking the momentary silence, "I begin to feel as though some one had been letting a lantern down into a well."

"That is true, Mary," said Brother Saintly. "Is not His Word a good lamp?"

"I'm afraid I did not know how to trim mine, for the light has been very dim," she answered, and then turning to her pastor, continued, "Did the apostles have anything to say about tithing after Jesus had gone away?"

"Yes," answered Randolph quickly, "by inference. You must remember that the apostles and the first Christian converts were all Jews, and therefore familiar with the law of Moses. There was no need to add anything further. The only question was, as Christians began to multiply and churches were organized in various places, 'What shall be done with the Lord's tithe?' At first the tithe was continued as a Jewish obligation for the maintenance of the temple and priesthood. Under the illuminating Spirit of Pentecost the new-formed Church established what must ever be the true ideal of brotherli-

ness—Christian Socialism.¹ They had all things common. The poor wanted nothing, and the rich had nothing over. That, if you please, is Christian giving. But though they were all Christians, they were likewise all Jews, and had no thought of departing from the ancient law. Doubtless some arrangement was made for the payment of tithes and offerings out of the common store, for we find the first Christians still taking part in the temple worship,² paying their vows,³ and making their offerings,⁴ as their fathers had done before them.”

“But presently,” continued Randolph, answering Mrs. Christopher’s eager look of inquiry, “the believers were persecuted and scattered.⁵ The community of goods which had been established in Jerusalem was no longer possible. Soon Christianity was bursting through the walls of Judaism, and Gentile Churches were formed, though in these converted Jews were always very numerous. Through the vigorous teaching of Paul the Churches began to recognize that rites and ceremonies were no part of Christianity, and, therefore, that the Christian had no obligation to perpetuate the elaborate and expensive services of the Jewish temple. Nevertheless, What shall be done with the tithe? Paul’s answer is very clear. Turn to First Corinthians, sixteenth chapter, second verse. Read, Sister Christopher.”

¹ Acts 11, 44, 45; 1v, 84, 85. ² Acts 111, 1; 11, 46. ³ Acts xviii, 18; xxi, 23, 24. ⁴ Acts xxi, 26. ⁵ Acts viii 1, 4.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” Mrs. Christopher read distinctly and with spirit.

“‘Lay by him in store,’” repeated Randolph. “You see Paul had no intention of appealing to the sympathies of an audience. The apostle never stooped to the wheedling tricks of the beggar. Such giving stultifies both him who gives and him who receives. But Paul follows the ancient law, with which he had been familiar from childhood; he enjoins that every believer shall regularly set apart a definite proportion of his income. But this amount, this tithe, let me call it, was not to be sent to the temple, or elsewhere, but he was to lay it by regularly ‘in store,’ each as God had prospered him, whether the tithe were small or great.”

“But why do you say ‘a tithe?’” asked Arthur. “Is n’t that more than is written?”

“It is ‘not written’ that there will be a hymn sung before I begin preaching next Sunday morning, and yet am I likely to depart from an order of Divine worship which has been hallowed by centuries of religious usage?” replied Randolph, with genial warmth. “Paul did not explicitly say that their offering should be a tithe, but one thing is certain, the Corinthians are commanded to give an amount proportionate to their income; they are to give each ‘as God hath prospered him.’ Now, remember, Paul is a Jew, and

learned in the Scriptures. In this very Epistle he reminds the Corinthians, in a most thrilling passage,⁶ that the Old Testament ordinances are 'our examples' and 'written for our admonition.' Now, Arthur, mark, and you, Sister Amy, keep count: First, Paul says the Corinthian Christians are to give; second, they are to give proportionately; third, he vigorously warns them that the Old Testament requirements are our examples, and their spiritual force as binding as in the olden times."

"Moreover," continued the pastor, noticing that his listeners were following him with close attention, "this Church could not have been ignorant of what these requirements were, for Paul himself had been their pastor to teach them for over a year and a half,⁷ and who could teach like Paul, who had so wonderfully mastered the unity of the Old and New dispensations? But not only was Paul the pastor of the Corinthian Church, but they had also for their teachers Aquila and Priscilla,⁸ those famous Scripture expositors of the early Church, at whose feet the eloquent and learned Apollos was compelled to sit.⁹ And if these were not enough to insure a good knowledge of the ancient law, their leading member was none other than Crispus,¹⁰ chief ruler of the Corinthian synagogue, who, with his entire family, 'believed on the Lord.' His conversion had the effect of bringing

⁶ 1 Cor. x, 1-18. ⁷ Acts xviii, 11. ⁸ Acts xviii, 2. ⁹ Acts xviii, 24-26. ¹⁰ Acts xviii, 8.

many of the Corinthians into the Church. Could Crispus and his family and all their Corinthian friends suddenly forget the Scriptures in which they had been taught from childhood? How many points have I covered, Sister Amy?"

"Six," promptly replied the latter, who had been keeping count on her fingers.

"Very well," continued Randolph, with a twinkle of humor in his eyes, "my seventh point is this, and, Arthur, you may make it yourself: When such a Church is asked for an offering for religious purposes, and reminded that their gifts must be in proportion to their incomes, what average percentage do you think it probable they would have in mind?"

"This is the first time I v'e been compelled to solve a question in exegesis by the old Rule of Three," said Arthur, laughing. "There is only one answer—a tenth, of course."

"I quite agree with you, Brother Randolph, that a fair inference compels us to say that a tenth was the minimum which a well-taught Christian would think of offering," said William Sprague, "but, remembering the example of the Church of Pentecost, it seems to me that those who were able were expected to give much more than a tenth. It was proportionate giving which the apostle commanded."

"I accept your amendment," said Randolph heartily, "for the spirit of God's Word is larger than the letter. Only let us remember that the more includes

the less, the larger takes in the smaller. I have known men to talk large things about the 'spirit of giving,' when their poor, withered souls have not yet grasped the reality of the letter. If a man honestly means to understand the 'spirit of giving,' a tithe is a very convenient prop to keep the door of his storehouse from blowing shut. But let us return. What was to be done with the offering? Read on, Sister Christopher."

"'And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem,'"¹¹ continued Mrs. Christopher.

"'Whomsoever ye shall approve,' note that well," observed Randolph. "Paul clearly recognizes that the administration of the funds of the Church must not be taken away from the duly qualified officers of the local congregation. Paul here emphasizes what had been so strongly announced in the Church of Pentecost, when seven deacons were appointed.¹² No pastor should be allowed to leave 'prayer' and 'the ministry of the Word' to 'serve tables;' the office-bearers of the Church are the ones called of God to this holy service." Then further explaining, Randolph continued:

"The Church at Jerusalem had now been reduced to great poverty. This was caused partly by the persecution of the Jews, and partly it arose from the confusion of the Jewish war with Rome, which ended finally in the destruction of Jerusalem and the tem-

¹¹ 1 Cor. xvi, 3

¹² Acts vi, 1-4.

ple, and the dispersion of the Jewish people. Do you not see how the gifts for the temple were gradually superseded by the care of the Church for its persecuted children? Presently a Gospel ministry occupied the place of the Levitical priesthood, with the apostolical sanction that 'they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.'¹³ The new era had fairly begun. The history of the Church is not all glorious. Human passion and unholy greed have darkened many of its pages. Even this law of 'the tithe' has been used for the foul purposes of extortion and rapine. But through all the centuries the light of the Gospel, sometimes dim, but always burning, has revealed the pathway to God."

"And now"—Randolph had forgotten his little audience; his soul swelled as with the vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz—"the glorious Church of Christ has swept into a world-conquering faith, whose 'line is gone out through all the earth.' The stately ceremonial, the gorgeous ritual of the Old Testament have forever passed away, but are the Churches, the Christian colleges, and the beckoning mission fields to-day less worthy to receive the tithes of God's people than was the ancient heritage of the sons of Jacob?"

No one answered. No one felt like speaking. There seemed nothing more to say.

¹³ 1 Cor. 9, 14.

CHAPTER VII.

"A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT!"

JOHN RANDOLPH reverently closed the Bible and returned it to its place. The little circle sat in silence as the evening light began to soften. Mary Christopher was thinking of John and Elsie and the children; she was thinking how some cherished plans must surely be given up; but, more than these, she was thinking of the unmeasured sacrifice of the Savior. There was no holding back, only glad and free surrender, as she breathed softly to herself,

"Take my silver and my gold
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take *myself*, and I will be
Ever, only, *all*, for Thee."

Presently, with a deep-drawn sigh of satisfaction, William Sprague turned to his pastor.

"I thank you from my heart, Brother Randolph," he said, "for the clear Bible study of this afternoon. I feel that my feet are on the rock. I am confident that tithing is God's will for his children, and not only for me, but for every other believer whose circumstances will permit it."

“Whose circumstances will permit it?” repeated Randolph with a quizzical air. “Just what, pray, do you mean by that?”

“Well,” answered the merchant, with some embarrassment, “a very poor man, with a family to support and educate, or with an indebtedness which he was bound to meet, could hardly be expected to take a tenth out of his income.”

“What!” Every one turned to old Brother Sainly. His voice was tinged with rebuke, and his face was full of pain. “William Sprague, would you add to the discomforts of poverty the hateful guilt of dishonesty? Because God permits me to be poor, would you compel me to look up at my brethren from the ground, and feel that I can not be a man among men? Did I not hear you, only last week, speak with deserved contempt of poor Soper, who, when he found that his business would be foreclosed by order of the court, privately sought out two or three of his creditors and paid their claims in full, leaving the others to take what they could find? You said such conduct revealed a character essentially dishonest. And yet you would have me prefer certain creditors and ignore the debt I owe to my highest and holiest Benefactor! Shall I repudiate the claims of Him who alone ‘giveth me power to get wealth?’ The poorest, meanest Jew was not exempt in the days of Israel; the law knew no exception. Shall a Christian take advantage of his liberty in Christ, and whine

to be excused? With one breath you tell me that God requires a tenth from all believers, and with the next you say the obligation is not binding if I have other claims against me! Ah, William, it was no such flimsy conscience as that which built up the solid success and honored name of 'William Sprague and Company.' Will a man rob God?"

No one had seen Brother Saintly so aroused since his early days, when he had been captain of volunteers. During his impassioned words he had arisen from his chair with hands extended as though in supplication. As Randolph watched him standing in the golden glory of a September sunset, his white hair an aureole about his head, and his face radiant with holy light, he thought of the Prophet Ezekiel by the river of Chebar, and the brightness that was about him.

"George Saintly's sun is almost setting," continued the old man, looking tenderly beyond the western hills, every trace of indignation gone. "Unto this hour my God hath supplied all my need, and," with a lifting of his head, "unto this hour my little store has not been touched until, month by month, my King has first received his tithe. You praised me, William," resting a hand lovingly upon the merchant's shoulder, "when God helped me so promptly to pay that mortgage for my poor Sam and keep his boys in school; but you never knew the nights that Sarah and I went supperless to bed, lest we should

be compelled to encroach upon the little portion that was holy for our God. No," with a bright smile as he saw the sympathetic look in Randolph's face, "we never hungered, for we had 'honey out of the rock' to eat, and 'the finest of the wheat.' Somehow I could pray better last year for the starving multitudes in India because I had not taken from them in order to feed myself. I know some have smiled at George Saintly's old gray hat and at Sarah Saintly's faded shawl, but it's a wonderful comfort to know that neither hat nor shawl was paid for by money taken out of the King's treasure box."

"Have ye not heard of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Tears slowly filled the old man's eyes and dropped softly upon his beard. "O my King was rich, so rich! He had honor, and love, and majesty, and dominion; yet for my sake he became poor, William, poor! He came unto his own, but his own received him not; the earth was his, for he made it, and yet no place had he to lay his head; weary for fellowship, homesick for his Father's house, in lonely poverty he lived, and in lonely suffering he died, and all for me, because he loved me so. He asks so little in return; only that I shall be good through his grace and help him a little in his kingdom. I can't do much, and the need is so very great; but I should be beneath my own contempt, if, for the sake of a bit of passing comfort, I forgot the perishing world, and robbed my King

of the poor little tithe which he had intended to use. O William, your words were full of heaviness. It is not for myself I speak; I soon shall see my Savior face to face. But after I am gone, never make a poor man feel that he can not be, every inch, a man."

"Forgive me, George," answered the merchant, as the tears ran unheeded down his face, "please God, I never shall," and William Sprague pressed the old man's hand in both of his, while Randolph repeated softly,

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd, for a' that!"

Arthur and Amy Roberts sat with clasped hands. Already they had begun to know the gladness which was to be theirs so fully in after years, for their new-built house was founded upon a rock.

But Mary Christopher heard nothing, saw no one. She was looking down the purple vista of the twilight. She was watching something as it faded out of sight. . . . Elsie's new piano, the seaside vacation, and the evening coat for John. She watched them disappearing in the distance, and wondered that there was no shade of sorrow in her heart. A light was shining in her eyes which was more than the glory of the departed sun, while the words of the beloved disciple tenderly formed themselves upon her lips, "This is the victory that overcometh the world."

"Ah, Mary," said Brother Saintly, as they arose to say "good-night," "I knew your victory was near."

PART II.

THE CHALLENGE.

Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts.

The end of the exploration is the beginning of the enterprise.—DAVID LIVINGSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

TRINTY CHURCH PRAYER-MEETING.

It was three weeks after the meeting of "The Veranda Bible Club," as Mrs. Christopher had named it, that Mr. Randolph met her coming out of the cottage of the Widow Sands.

"Do you know the meaning of your name, Mrs. Christopher?" he asked, stopping her abruptly.

"Why, what a question!" with a merry laugh. "It's a plain, home-spun name. The only reason I like it is because John gave it to me. What does it mean?"

"It is not so home-spun as you imagine. On the contrary, it is beautifully classic. It is a Greek derivative, and means 'the Christ-bearer,' and, my sister, from what I have observed and heard during the past three weeks, I am satisfied the name is worthily borne."

The color deepened in Mrs. Christopher's cheeks. "O, Mr. Randolph, do you think that could ever be really spoken of me? I have been so happy since that Monday at Amy Roberts's. We had a 'family talk' that same night, and John and I began the first of this month to lay aside our tenth. After this reso-

lution was once formed I was astonished to see how easily all our other plans worked into it."

"How has Elsie taken it?"

A shade of anxiety crossed the mother's face. "I can not tell yet," she answered. "She was with us, of course, that first Monday night when we talked it over at home. We had about decided to get Elsie a piano on her nineteenth birthday, which is this month. You know we could pay for it on the 'installment plan.' We had not actually promised it, but we had talked about it freely. That was really my one struggle, for we can not pay our tenth and buy the piano also. Of course, Elsie understands it; she says she does n't mind very much, but I know she is deeply disappointed. She is doing so well in her music. Mr. Locke tells me she has unusual talent, not only in her playing, but he said her voice was full of promise, and he is determined she shall go to the London Conservatory. He even speaks of a course abroad, but that seems too shadowy and far away for actual thought. It has been my earnest desire to give her a thorough course in music, and the piano was part of the plan. But she must do the best she can with her practice hours at the college. Really, she is doing so well that I am entirely content. **only** I do n't want the dear girl to be disappointed. When she came home from the Young People's Meeting last evening I saw she had been crying, but she went to

her room without saying anything. You see, Mr. Randolph, Elsie must have the victory as well as her mother," and Mrs. Christopher looked anxiously into her pastor's face.

"Last night was a consecration-meeting," said Randolph, "and I thought Elsie seemed specially blessed. Cyril McDermott led the meeting, and spoke with unusual earnestness. The subject was 'What have I given up for Jesus?' I assure you the testimonies showed that our young people know more of the spirit of sacrifice than we are accustomed to think. Elsie did not speak, but after the closing prayer we sang 'Where He leads me I will follow,' and I saw in her eyes something more than the traces of tears. I believe, my sister, that Elsie is beginning to understand the deep meaning of Christian consecration. You may be sure God will honor your own obedience, and Elsie will find something infinitely more precious to her than the best piano money can buy."

"O, if she could have that, I would willingly give up everything else, yes, music and everything," said Mrs. Christopher, with happy tears in her eyes.

"A yielded will is all that God asks; He will do the rest. 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' Elsie is in good hands. Good-bye. Do n't forget the Wednesday meeting."

"Not much danger of that!" replied Mrs. Chris-

topher, laughing. "Have n't I been out all day reminding everybody?" and she hurried away with a light heart.

* * * *

The first Wednesday prayer-meeting in October was an eventful one in the history of Trinity Church. The following notice on the Church bulletin had been the source of no little discussion :

TITHERS' LEAGUE.

Believing it to be the clear teaching of Scripture that God commands his people to return unto him at least *one-tenth* of their income for the maintenance of his Church and the increase of his kingdom among men, we deem it fitting and wise that Trinity Church should recognize the Divine Commandment as the practical basis of its financial administration. All members, therefore, who receive this as the teaching of the Word of God, and who are ready to bring their "tithes into the storehouse," are requested to meet at the close of the prayer-meeting on the first Wednesday in October for the purpose of forming a *Tithers' League*.

By order of the Official Board,

September 24, 190 -

FRANK STRONG,
Secretary.

As John Randolph left the parsonage on that eventful Wednesday evening, he said to his wife, "I fear we shall have a slim meeting to-night, scarcely any one has mentioned the matter to me for the last week." The fact is, Randolph was himself passing

through severe temptation. He knew that much speech and deep thought do not always walk together, and yet he had suffered, as many another pastor has suffered, for the lack of kindly words of appreciation and encouragement. As he entered the vestry of the church, he experienced a revulsion of feeling as exhilarating as an electric shock. Not since the beginning of his present pastorate had he seen the room so filled on a prayer-meeting night. He leaned his head against the desk for a moment of silent prayer before opening the service, and his spirit sang with the psalmist, "Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness."

As he announced the first hymn his eyes quickly took in the congregation. Trinity Church was famed for its large and interesting prayer-meetings, but this night Randolph was overjoyed to see some who were seldom there, strong men of business, little given to the expression of religious experience, but of undoubted Christian character. Among these were the merchant William Sprague, Percival Hanley, editor of the *Uplook*; and Harrison Crossley, counsel for the Southern Railway. Nearly a dozen of the earnest young men of the Church were present, headed by Cyril McDermott, president of the Young People's Society. It was evident a few in the congregation were there from curiosity, but the far greater number had come from a week of thoughtful fellowship with Christ.

Randolph announced:

“Of Him who did salvation bring,
I could forever think and sing.”

As the words of the sweet, mediæval hymn swelled from the hearts of the congregation, the atmosphere grew vital with the Presence of Him who faileth not to meet with two or three. It was a meeting that grips hold. The prayers were short, but crowded with desire. Randolph read the song of Moses and of Miriam. There was no need of comment. Brother Saintry was sure he could hear the timbrels and the shouting. Harrison Crossley felt again the movings of his early years and made public confession that the brooks had late been running dry. Mary Christopher spoke in a low voice of the new blessing that had come into her life, and Elsie's brown eyes were soft with unspoken love. Farmer Shapleigh, who always came out strong at camp-meetings, was of opinion that a revival was near, and, with intense enjoyment, raised the stanza:

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small —”

The congregation joined with heartfelt fervor, and, as the last words died away, Roger Greene, treasurer of the Church, whose spiritual name was “Faithful,” arose and said:

“Brethren, there's small chance of any of us owning ‘the whole realm of nature,’ and so, I suppose, it

is safe enough for us to sing of what we would do in case we were able to realize on that bit of poetic collateral. I have no question that God is glorified by our songs, and, by the same token, I am sure he expects us to make our cash settlement on that basis. The only part of 'Nature's realm' that I have any right to administer is eighty acres of rather fair pasture land, three horses, and thirty head of good milch cows. It is rather a small parcel to put up alongside 'the whole realm of nature,' but, by God's help"—and Roger Greene's voice grew vibrant—"from now on, the cash book and ledger of the 'Brookside Dairy' will show that I mean every word of that hymn."

As the treasurer resumed his seat, Brother Shapleigh (who owned three hundred and twenty acres of rich farmland and two town houses) crossed and uncrossed his legs with an uneasy movement, and looked at his watch. But the hearty "Amen" from a dozen lips showed that there was cordial response to the treasurer's sentiment.

One or two short prayers followed, filled with rejoicing and praise. As the pastor announced the closing hymn he reminded the members of the special meeting that was to follow. "Remember," he said, "no pressure must be placed upon a single person. Such action as is contemplated must be the result of thorough conviction and deliberate judgment."

Very few of the members left the church. Brother Shapleigh whispered to Mrs. Christopher that he must

hurry home, as he had forgotten to lock the garden gate and he was "afraid the cow might get into the cabbages." In the entry he was overheard to remark to Miss Midgeon, the milliner, that he "enjoyed religion as much as any man," but there was "no sense in carrying things too far," with which Miss Midgeon entirely agreed.

"A tenth indeed!" she said, fastening her glove with a vicious jerk. "I think Mr. Randolph is perfectly morbid on the subject. Of course, I do not keep an account of how much I give; I'm not such a Pharisee as that; but I'm sure it is much more than a tenth. Indeed I should not be surprised if I gave almost a twentieth!" and Miss Midgeon, whose head was made for feathers and not fractions, flounced through the doorway.

Brother Shapleigh, with his mind in a confused jumble, went home to bed. But Miss Midgeon's fractions and Roger Greene's testimony got strangely mixed, for poor Brother Shapleigh had not been blessed at the prayer-meeting. He dreamed that he was at a camp-meeting where ten cows ate the twentieth part of a straw bonnet, and the preacher said "the whole realm of nature" had broken into his cabbages.

CHAPTER II.

THE ATTORNEY'S PLEA.

"WELL, that was the most fruitful 'after meeting' I ever attended," said Randolph to his wife, as they sat late that night in their cozy parlor.

Brother Saintly walked home on the air. "Was it a good meeting, George?" asked his wife, who was reading under the drop-light. "Sarah Saintly," returned her husband, as he hung his hat on the nail, "unless all signs fail, Trinity Church is going to have a revival this winter such as we have not seen for thirty years."

And yet there was never a meeting with a more prosaic, matter-of-fact object.

* * * *

Frank Strong was appointed secretary for the evening. After reading the resolution of the Official Board, he added: "We seem quite agreed as to the duty of tithing. You see, Brother Randolph, for the last three weeks we have heard nothing else. Between your sermon, and Brother Sprague's arguments, and Sister Christopher's visits, we have no ground left to stand on, even if there were any disposition to

oppose the truth. The only question in our mind is, How shall we dispose of our tenth? I am sure I speak the mind of all the brethren in asking you to state the matter as you did at our last board meeting."

"What Brother Strong doubtless refers to is some words that I spoke concerning 'the storehouse,' suggested by that familiar passage, Malachi, third chapter, and tenth verse," answered the pastor, addressing the congregation. He was a clear speaker, and received the closest attention. Bibles were opened.

"You notice how easily this text falls into three parts," began Randolph. "First is a command, 'Bring ye all the tithes;' second, a challenge, 'Prove Me, saith the Lord;' and third, a promise, 'I will pour you out a blessing.' The unchangeableness of the command, the glory of the challenge, and the certainty of the promise have already been suggested, and need no further discussion now. Only one question remains. 'All the tithes' (or, as the Revised Version more correctly renders it, 'the whole tithe,' meaning a full and honest tithe) were to be brought into the 'storehouse.' The Israelite could not dispose of his tenth as it might please his fancy. It was to be 'brought to God's storehouse, that there might be meat in His house.' What is meant by this?"

"To the Jew," continued the pastor, "there could be no question. The 'storehouse' was the temple, with its divinely appointed worship and its priestly sacrifices. The Jew no more thought of diverting his

tithe from its proper uses than of profaning the Holy of Holies. The text itself is entirely clear, and needs no comment. It is only in our effort to transfer the spirit of this ancient commandment into modern Church life that many seem to have missed the purpose of the original law of 'the tithe.' I am not at liberty to use my tenth for indiscriminate gifts. If types and symbols have any meaning, and if there be any force in the eternal fitness of things, then the Church of God is the storehouse to receive and administer the tithes of Christian believers."

As John Randolph paused, there was a hum of subdued conversation. Some shook their heads as though dissenting, some approved, some seemed to wait for further confirmation of their pastor's views. They had not long to wait. Harrison Crossley arose. He seldom spoke, and his words were always valued by those who desired clearly expressed convictions.

"I am of the opinion," he said, "that our pastor has given us no wiser suggestion than the one just made. I was intensely interested when the matter was brought before our last board meeting. I may say that, until some years ago, I was a careful and conscientious tither. Some of you may not think it, but one finds it a deal easier to give his tenth when he is living economically on a small income than when fortune begins to smile, and money is plentiful. I have never given up my early convictions, which were formed in boyhood under the instruction of a godly

father, and I have none but myself to blame for the laxity of these later years; nevertheless I am deeply convinced that my gradual lapse as a tither was because I had no clearly defined object for which my tithe was to be expended."

"It was my custom," continued the attorney, meeting the inquiring eyes of his listeners with frankness, "to do as, doubtless, some of you are accustomed. I would lay aside my tenth when I drew my salary, and out of this I would make my various contributions. First came my monthly Church subscription, then my Young Men's Christian Association dues, and after that various charities and the benevolent collections. As my salary increased I was glad to increase my Church subscriptions, until I thought I was paying about my share. Right there was the beginning of my blunder."

"I could wish a few others would commit the same 'blunder,'" said the treasurer, in an audible whisper.

"Yes, but listen," said Harrison Crossley. All faces were turned toward him as he continued: "I thought I was a member of Trinity Church. I was glad of that, proud of it. But I never took in the thought that I was also a living unit in an organism immeasurably greater than any local congregation. I thought after I had paid an equitable share toward pastoral support and current expenses, and had made my annual subscription to the Church benevolences, that my financial obligations had been generously

discharged. It never occurred to me that our Church schools and our network of missions in every land are like the thirsty sea, while Trinity Church is but one of thousands of streams and rivulets which should carry their wealth into its bosom.

“What petty ideals has the man who thinks ‘life’ is the making of a ‘living!’ What merchant would continue in business, who, year after year, found that his profits were eaten up by the expenses? What general would lead forth an army to fight for—rations! And yet Trinity Church—and I believe it has a good average, both of sense and piety—has for years been accounted in a prosperous financial condition. Why? Because, forsooth, we have managed to pay our pastor his modest salary, have incurred no debts, and have usually raised our apportionments for the benevolent collections. That is to say, a Church of two hundred members, most of whom are in comfortable circumstances, and some of whom might be called wealthy, has actually succeeded in keeping its doors open for twenty years without running into debt!”

Harrison Crossley’s speech caused a mild sensation. But he had not yet finished. He continued:

“Now, brethren, I condemn only myself when I say that the Lord’s tenth has been turned aside from its rightful uses. If you will pardon further personal reference, I continued to make what I considered to be a proper distribution of my tithe, as I have already suggested. This was not difficult, for my tenth was

only a small amount. Then came increased prosperity and certain large professional fees. I gave freely to local charities, and aided in the building of Memorial Hall, as you all know; but, somehow, the regularity of my subscriptions was interrupted. I found it more and more difficult to keep account of the Lord's tenth, and, in a word, I finally lapsed into what you have known me to be these last dozen years—a fairly prosperous, fairly generous member of the Church; but the joy and fire of my early manhood has been sadly lacking. I do not begrudge the money I have given to various worthy enterprises. Perhaps it might be said of me, 'These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' One thing I know, and confess here with deep regret, I have diverted into other channels much of the money which, by every analogy of life, and the clear teaching of Scripture, should have been paid, as the Lord's tithe, into the treasury of his Church."

"Do you mean the treasury of Trinity Church?" asked Roger Greene, who was wondering how it would seem to record such unheard-of subscriptions.

"Certainly," continued the speaker, who had not yet taken his seat, "always remembering that Trinity Church is but one of many branch agencies, authorized to receive and transmit the funds which belong to the whole Church."

"O, my brethren," continued the attorney, advanc-

ing to the front, and facing the congregation with suffused countenance, "I love the dear Church in which I found the Savior; my memory is filled to-night with its hallowed associations. Why should I search outside its borders for opportunities to invest my Lord's money? The tithe is not a charity. In ancient Israel a special tithe was collected for charitable purposes, and other offerings besides. The first tithe was holy. Not even for the poor could it be used. It was for the solemn sacrifice and the majestic worship of Jehovah. Times have changed, but not the purposes of God. The temple in Jerusalem is no more, but before it passed away there burst from its beautiful gate the evangel of 'the wondrous Son of God,' a Savior for all the world. Whole continents still lie shrouded in darkness. Multitudes unnumbered wait for the messengers of Jesus—

"Children crying in the night,
Children crying for the light.'

Without a guide they are entering the shadows of the grave, forty millions every year. O, my brethren, until 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,' the tithe of God's people must be kept sacred for the direct increase of His kingdom, and the maintenance of His worship. I have no right to use any portion of it for works of 'charity' and 'reform.'"

“Indeed,” and Harrison Crossley’s words were with the authority of the Holy Spirit, “I am bold to say that, if God’s tithe were faithfully paid, and sacredly guarded for its divine mission in the world, there would be such an overflow for charities, for hospitals and asylums, for temperance and social reforms, as these agencies for good have never known. Under the inspiring influence of our Christian civilization, men will never be wanting, who, though they be not themselves personal followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, are nevertheless ready to endow colleges and equip libraries for general and secular education, and for the advancement of science. Under the leadership of Christian thought, and yet alienated from the deeper purposes of God through his Church, a new word has of late come into vogue. ‘Humanitarianism’ is the new shibboleth. More and more does public sentiment demand that increase in philanthropy shall keep pace with increase in wealth. The world will care for its own. Shall not the Church care for its own? In this new day of public-spirited beneficence, shall the supreme command of Christ be slightly received? My brethren, I have erred. I have asked God’s forgiveness. I shall continue to aid worthy causes as I may have opportunity and ability, but henceforth my tithe is sacred for the Church of God, for its schools of Christian training, and for its missions at home and abroad. As the ancient law did not permit the Jew to use aught of his

tithe for the payment of a vow,¹ so my tithe is not my own. It is holy unto the Lord."

As the gray-haired attorney ceased speaking and resumed his seat, Brother Saintly leaned over and whispered, "Ah, Harry, I always told you you made a mistake when you did not become a preacher."

¹ Lev. xxvii, 30, 32.

CHAPTER III.

THE KING'S BUSINESS.

"I WANT to add but a few words to what Brother Crossley has so stirringly spoken."

William Sprague was on his feet. The close attention which Harrison Crossley had commanded was at once transferred to the merchant. The people knew his sterling worth, and prized his strong yet conservative judgment on all matters of administration. No one missed a syllable as, with grave deliberation, he proceeded:

"Our Lord said that 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' I have seen commercial houses grow into great corporations, and eventually amalgamate into gigantic trusts, with agencies and subagencies throughout the land and throughout the world, heaping up riches for their fortunate directors. What is the secret of their success? Organization, foresight, economy. I do not now speak of the economic and social problems that are raised by these remarkable combinations of money and brains. I am only suggesting the wonderful possibilities of winning this world for Christ, when to money, brains, and men is added the infinite power of the Holy Ghost."

There was a glow of joy in Brother Saintly's face. Randolph looked and listened with every sense alert.

"Why," continued the merchant, "do we not exercise that same business sagacity and broad statesmanship in the Church which we are expected to exercise in the world? Surely 'the King's business' is business! No financial trust has such stupendous income as the combined tithe of God's people. No business organization has such thousands of incorruptible agents. Where can we find directors more judicious than our great Church committees? Where can we discover executive officers more statesman-like than our bishops and secretaries? Where shall we look for investments more certain of immediate and permanent returns than our Christian schools and the white mission fields of the Church? Why, then, are our colleges lean with famine, our missionary societies forced to retrench, and thousands of local congregations barely able to meet their yearly expenses? Are our pastors faithless? our schools extravagant? our secretaries inefficient? Have our missionaries wasted the resources of the Church? Ah, brethren, shame is me! We, the people, have heaped to ourselves that which belongs to another. We have eked out little dribs of money, and called them our 'benevolent subscriptions!' We have no business to make our Church schools beg for support; it is theirs of right. The open doors in China and the present

unequaled opportunity in India and Japan do not plead for gifts; the struggling Church, now forming in these heathen lands asks only the portion that belongs to it, of which it has been defrauded. To think that William Sprague has been eating the bread of the hungry, and yet with a conscience void of offense! And, brethren—shall I say it? You and I are guilty together—‘Will a man rob God?’ Yet we have robbed Him. Wherein? In tithes, brethren, in tithes and offerings. God forgive us, and grant us grace to repent, lest we be cursed with a curse.”¹

The hush that followed the solemn words of William Sprague was oppressive. As Randolph stood, leaning over the pulpit desk, he saw heads dropped in silent confession. Tears were in many eyes. Elsie crept close to her mother with a little quivering sigh. Cyril McDermott had the look of one just awakened from sleep. The young men sitting with him leaned forward with fixed attention.

Frank Strong had been watching the merchant with peculiar interest, amounting almost to fascination. He was confidential clerk of William Sprague & Company, and knew, better than any other man, the sterling integrity of his employer. He had been trained in exact business habits, and instinctively felt that back of William Sprague’s burning speech was the cool judgment and matured plan of the experienced man of affairs. The question

¹ Mal. iii, 8, 9.

that formed on his lips was the natural habit of his daily intercourse.

"What would you advise?" he asked, as though it were a matter of the firm's financial policy.

"Simply this," answered the merchant, with deliberate exactness; "let every member of Trinity Church, who is ready to obey the command of God, lay aside one-tenth of his income, and pay the same with all possible regularity into the treasury of the Church, from which let it be paid out, for local Church support and general Church benevolences, according to a fixed proportion, or, as may be determined by the tithers themselves!"

It required a full minute for the congregation to take in the meaning of the proposition. Presently a clear voice spoke:

"I should like to ask a question at this point."

All eyes were turned in the direction of the speaker. Percival Hanley, editor of the *Uplook*, had been listening, as was his wont, with quiet but intent interest, his head bent slightly forward, and eyes resting on the ground. The *Uplook* kept abreast of the new age, but it never forgot the landmarks of the past. On matters of opinion, Percival Hanley could "live and let live;" on every question of conscience he was as unbending as granite. His speech, no less than his pen, commanded attention. He had none of the arts of the declaimer; he used the emphasis of clarified thought.

"I have read of other days," he said, "when a great Church was the depository of vast sums of money, and when a world-embracing conquest was the dream of its leaders. But I have also read that those were the days of shameful ecclesiastical corruption, and that love for God was eaten out by lust for gold. Those were the days when the unthinking people paid their wealth into the hands of the priests, as silly sheep caress the hand of the shearer. It has cost mankind much agony and blood to escape from under the yoke of Rome. Do I understand our pastor to teach the divine authority of the priesthood?"

"Yes; the priesthood of the people!"

Randolph's swift answer burst like a ball from a rifle. He continued, in ringing tones:

"Brethren, the fact is, in our protest against the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church, we have protested too far. We have so vehemently preached the doctrine of individualism that our social fabric is like to fall to pieces for want of that cohesion which is impossible without organization and authority. Nihilism and anarchy are the legitimate result of overemphasizing the gospel of liberty. There can be no true liberty without the reign of law. Protestants would do well to ask if they have not thrown away much wheat with the chaff. I do not fear the boggy man of 'Romanism.' The paths of truth and falsehood lie often side by side.

The danger is, not so much that we will fall into the error, but that we will fear to follow the truth. There is hardly one of the pretensions of Rome but that has its roots deep down in the nature of man, and its sanction in the Word of God. The folly of Rome and her menace to society is the half-truths with which she deals. The assumption of priestly authority loses its gruesome aspect, and becomes a vital force in the Church, when we remember that, through the Blood of Christ, all true disciples have entered within the veil and are become 'kings and priests unto God.'"

"Have you not noticed," continued Randolph, earnestly, "how the Roman Church seems always able to command its forces; always able to preempt the choicest real estate for schools and churches; and how, in the face of the Protestant Reformation, it is still able to cover the earth with a powerful propaganda? And yet the history of civilization has proved that the doctrines of the Reformation are the conquering faith, able to transform men and nations from pigmies to giants. This hour, Protestant nations own or control the world's wealth, while vast treasure is in the hands of Protestant Church members. Why, then, do we creep, when we might fly through the earth with the glad gospel of our risen Lord? Is it possible that we place less confidence in each other than does the Church of Rome in its Jesuitical priest-

hood? Is the Pentecostal Church to be forever a dream of the past? Brother Hanley has suggested that 'a world-embracing conquest was the dream' of the mediæval Church. He mistakes. It was the great commission, the last command, of the Son of God. The shame of the Church is that we have not long since fulfilled our heaven-planned design—the will of God and the desire of angels. O brethren, let us no longer be afraid of ourselves! Government by the people is the final solution of Statecraft. Shall Protestantism fear, shall our own Church fear, to trust itself to the priesthood of the people? We have the triumphant theology we have the men, we have the opportunity; now give us the tithe of God, that we fail not for want of the bread that perisheth."

John Randolph was always an earnest preacher; he never dealt in pulpit trifles; but seldom had his people heard him lift up his voice with such supreme conviction. Years of thought and study were packed in three minutes of trenchant speech. Percival Hanley arose as Randolph paused, but not to reply.

"My question was not prompted by doubt," he said, "but by faith. It is because I so thoroughly agree with our pastor, and am in such accord with the proposition before us, that I desired this point well brought out. I am confident also that Mr. Randolph will be the first to agree with me,

that, in entering upon this plan of Church finance—for I assume that most of us are agreed as to its desirability—we shall guard ourselves against future dissatisfaction by reserving the right to give direction to our own individual tithes, although the Church treasury should act as a clearing-house to make the actual payments. Let us not, in our enthusiasm, lightly give away what cost so much to gain. I like that expression which our pastor used, ‘the priesthood of the people;’ let us not forget the centuries of bloody sweat before such liberty of thought and action was possible. We will pay our tithes into the treasury of the Church; but let us not abandon the principle of individual selection.”

“It is a perfectly sound argument,” continued the editor, “to insist that our offerings shall go to the world-wide work of our own Church. If a person has lost confidence in the divine mission of his own Church, he would better seek membership in some branch of the Church of Christ with which he can have complete fellowship. I have no patience with that affectation of broadmindedness which will see the missionary and educational enterprises of one’s own Church suffer from lack of spiritual and financial support, while it talks largely of its ‘Christian duty to all the Churches.’ Fancy a man permitting his own wife and children to go hungry under the plea that he must do his

duty by society! A man's broadest service to society is in providing for the support and education of his own family; and a Christian's best service for the cause of universal righteousness is in making his own Church a tower of strength. When Nehemiah built the wall for the oppressed city of God, every man had his part to do, each one over against his own house,² and so the whole task was accomplished. A soldier is no less a part of the army because he marches in his own division, and bears his own regimental colors. The 'denominations' in Christ's earthly Church stand as so many monuments to commemorate great historical movements when Zion was in travail. The noble Church of England, in common with the other Churches of the Protestant Reformation, helped to lay the foundations of our modern civilization. So also the great Nonconformist bodies of Protestantism tell of days when men bought the right to think and speak, as each interpreted for himself the Word of God, and paid the price with his own blood. So also the Methodist movement in England and America compelled men to examine the practical foundations of their faith, and saved the Church of God from the dry rot of formalism. Denominational loyalty means a full, rounded interpretation of the whole Christian life, for each great

² Neh. iv, 6; vii, 3.

division of Christ's Church has its own precious legacy of truth."

"But let me say further," added Percival Hanley, whose eyes glowed under their beetling brows, "that denominational loyalty is a very different thing from sectarian prejudice. One of the most pitiful pictures in history is the procession of ecclesiastical bigots, who, each in turn, undertake to guard the entrance to the fold of Christ—who only is the Door, and who alone knoweth them that are his. Here is the ancient Eastern Church excommunicating and anathematizing her Western sister, the Church of Rome. And here is the Church of Rome, with disdainful looks, refusing to recognize the orders of her step-daughter, the Church of England. And lo! here is the Anglican Church, smarting under her wounded pride, and loftily ignoring her own son in the faith, the Church of Christ, called Methodist. The study of theology must dull the edge of one's natural perceptions, for we have the spectacle of one ecclesiastical body, and then another, gravely announcing itself as 'The Church' and the rest of Christendom as the 'sects'—and yet apparently failing to perceive the humor of the performance! Fie on every travesty of Christian fellowship which can not recognize a brother outside its own Church wall! Out upon the narrow foreheads who let men perish while they debate

the modes of sacraments, or who fancy that the Holy Ghost is concerned with questions of Churchly millinery! When will men remember that apostolical succession is measured by apostolical success!"

There was a stir for a moment; then Frank Strong, the business-like secretary, asked:

"But what has that to do with tithing?"

"Just this," responded Hanley, with spirit, "unless we recognize the dignity of the great Church of which we form a part, with its Divine mission in the world, and, except we recognize our personal and vital union with all its interests, we will not be content to make it the depository of our tithes. Men will good-naturedly give 'a collection' to almost any object; but they will make their permanent investments only after mature conviction.

"And now, let me repeat, that, while our tithes should go to the world-wide work of our own Church, within these limits there is still very large room for personal preference, and these individual desires and preferences must be respected or the whole financial plan will presently fall to the ground. Therefore, in order that our administration shall be guarded against a possible temptation, and, in order that every individual shall retain an intelligent interest in the diversified work of the Church, I am confident that each member must be left free to choose the special objects for which he desires

his tithe to be expended, and to designate what amount shall be paid to each."

"Did not Brother Sprague include that in the proposition he made a few moments ago?" asked the treasurer.

"Yes; but it seems to me that a definite plan should be submitted which would make the division of the tithe easily understood, and as easily recorded," concluded Percival Hanley as he took his seat.

"That can be done without the least difficulty," said Frank Strong, who had been busily writing at the secretary's table.

CHAPTER IV.

EXPENSES AND INVESTMENTS.

JOHN RANDOLPH turned toward the secretary with hearty good will.

"If Brother Strong can lead us out of the woods," he said, "I suggest that he be given the right of way. We theologians and Church historians have well-nigh run away with Brother Sprague's proposition."

"By no means," spoke William Sprague, with emphasis. "On the contrary, you have shown that 'the King's business,' more than any other, needs the constant safeguards of watchfulness and prayer. But I am sure our secretary has something to say. I've seen him use that fountain-pen before," and the merchant's look toward his trusted clerk was as a father to his son.

Frank Strong arose, and, without introduction or comment, straightway began:

"First, let us follow the plan of every well-founded commercial enterprise, and enter our Church income and expenditure under two general divisions, which, in business phrase, I would call 'Fixed

Charges' and 'Investments.' Under 'Fixed Charges' would come the necessary expenses of the local Church; such as light, fuel, janitor service, insurance, repairs, etc., and would include, of course, as its main item, the salary of our pastor. In a commercial house these amounts would correspond to 'the cost of conducting the business;' they are the expenses of administration. Now come the 'Investments,' by which, as you at once see, I mean the forward work of the Church and its missionary operations at home and abroad. This would include our own local Church enterprises, such as the Fourth Street Mission and Training-school, and the support of our deaconess. Then follow our great connectional causes, with such special gifts as may be desired. Each member divides his tithe as he may himself elect, and the treasurer enters the items in the general funds under the proper headings, and pays them over to the properly-qualified persons."

"For instance," continued the secretary, glancing at the writing-pad in his hand, "some member—say, John Robinson—receives a salary of one hundred dollars per month; his tithe is ten dollars. In dividing this, suppose he gives—"

"Can you not illustrate your outline on the black-board, so that all may understand?" said the pastor, noticing that some were following with difficulty.

The Bible-class board was moved in front of the congregation, on which the secretary, with quick and practiced hand, placed the following outline:

TITHE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND EXTENSION OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD, AND PAID THROUGH THE TREAS-
URY OF TRINITY CHURCH.

AMOUNT: *Ten Dollars.* This amount shall be applied as under:

I. FOR CHURCH SUPPORT.

For the maintenance of TRINITY CHURCH, and
for the salary of the pastor\$4 00 \$4 00

II. FOR CHURCH WORK.

Regular.

1. City Evangelization.....	\$0 75	
2. Home Missions	1 00	
3. Foreign Missions.....	2 50	
4. Educational Society.....	50	
5. Bible Society	25	\$5 00

Special.

1. _____		
2. Brocton Seminary.....	\$1 00	
3. _____		
4. _____		\$1 00
Total		\$10 00

DATE: 4th October, 190—

(Signed) JOHN ROBINSON.

"I'm greatly obliged to you, Frank, for your clear illustration of my thought," said William Sprague, leaning towards his clerk, and speaking in a low voice.

"There is one practical difficulty which I see must be guarded against," said Percival Hanley, who had been closely studying the outline on the board. "In our zeal for the forward work and the general benevolences, we may underestimate our individual share toward the necessary expenses of our own Church. It would be a strange anomaly to have an overflowing treasury, and, at the same time, a deficit in the current accounts."

"I have thought of that," replied the merchant, quickly. "It is evident—if you will pardon the language of the office—that we can not realize on the 'investments' unless we pay the 'expenses.' We must look after insurance, repairs, and janitor service, or we shall have no fit place in which to worship, and certainly I speak for you all in saying that we do not propose to pay our benevolent subscriptions out of the pastor's pocket. I have occasion to know that Mr. Randolph has abundant opportunity to make such payments for himself. The estimating committee must see that our Church expenses are kept within the bounds of reasonable economy, and then these must be recognized as a first demand upon the treasury. The good name of our Church must always be guarded as we guard our own individual credit. Therefore if, at the close of any month, there should be a deficit in the receipts for Church support, let the treasurer at once make known the fact, and request that the

members vary the distribution of their tithes, so as to make up the deficit in the month ensuing."

"And what if there should be a credit balance instead of a deficit?" asked Strong.

"We could not be certain of that until the end of the year," answered William Sprague. "If at that time the current accounts showed a balance on hand, the amount could be placed in a contingent fund, to provide against loss by the death or removal of members, or—and perhaps better—it could be distributed to the various benevolences, as might be determined."

"Determined by whom?" asked Hanley, smiling.

"By the tithers themselves," answered the merchant. "I clearly see the point which Brother Hanley wishes to guard, and it is a most important one. I was about to suggest that we should hold a tithers' and subscribers' meeting at least once a year, if not once a quarter, freely to discuss our Church finances, and at such a meeting this matter could be settled by majority vote."

"But, Mr. Sprague, there are some of 'us who do not understand these things," said Mrs. Christopher, with a troubled look. "I would so much rather some one else would choose for me—some one who has studied the situation, and knows all about it. I will be so glad to give the tithe if some one else will distribute it. Could not that be done?"

"Certainly," replied William Sprague, whose clear thought now dominated the meeting. "I think, Sister Christopher, you will find that point well covered by my original proposition. The Official Board can carefully estimate our probable resources, and establish an equitable proportion for the division of those tithes not divided by the contributors themselves. I am not sure whether it was accidental or not, but, in his outline on the board, Brother Strong has indicated the very ratio which, it seems to me, we ought to adopt; that is, providing the Church with some fair degree of unanimity enters into this plan. You notice that the hypothetical 'John Robinson' has divided his tithe so as to give forty per cent to Church support and sixty per cent to Church work, and the latter he has distributed in what seems to me a very fair proportion—though that, of course, is a matter of one's own personal convictions. I have no doubt there are many who, like Sister Christopher, would prefer to have their tithes distributed by those who have carefully studied both local and general needs."

"I suggest," said the treasurer, "that Brother Strong's outline be printed, as a blank form, on our regular collection envelopes; these could then be used by other subscribers and contributors, as well as by the tithers, in making their payments for the support and work of the Church."

"A very excellent suggestion, Brother Greene,"

added 'the pastor. "When a Church is strongly supported by its own members, so that its current expenses are well provided for, there will be many worshipers and other adherents, not members, who will be glad to contribute towards its aggressive Christian work."

The congregation sat in quiet thought for a moment, and then Harrison Crossley arose slowly to his feet.

"There is one matter in connection with Brother Strong's excellent outline," he said, speaking in a low voice, "of which I hesitate to speak, and yet, it seems to me, it should be mentioned. The outline suggests that each member is to place a tenth of his income in an envelope, properly indorsed, which he is to pass into the treasury. There are some who might find it embarrassing to make public the amount of their income, and this from the most honorable motives. Indeed, I could easily name instances from my professional experience in which a man would have no right to give information which could be used to the injury of involved interests. I remember also, in less prosperous days, how I myself would have hesitated before making public the narrow straits through which my wife and I were often compelled to pass. The sacredness of private life must not be invaded. This consideration involves a question in ethics, and I would like our pastor to suggest a right solution."

CHAPTER V.

AS UNTO THE LORD.

THE pastor was silent for a moment. Then looking up with steady eyes, he replied:

"Let all those who so desire inclose their tithe, indicating the amount given and the distribution to be made, and let them pass it into the treasury without signing their names or otherwise indicating the source from which the money comes. If they prefer, let them pay the amount at different times and in varying sums, and use the envelope or not, at their own discretion."

"Who, then, would be able to 'keep tab?' " asked the secretary, with a keen look.

"Almighty God!" said Roger Greene, with so much emphasis that every one looked at the quiet little treasurer in amazement. "I've been treasurer of this Church," he said, pointing every word with his index finger, "long enough to know that if a man intends to keep his solemn vow of Church membership, he will keep it under all circumstances, and that, if he regards his vow as a light thing, he is not likely to respond to any appeals or reminders that the treasurer may send him. Brethren, I hail

this as the day of our deliverance. Let Brother Sprague's proposition be put in the form of a voluntary pledge. This pledge shall be a solemn covenant with God, and a declaration of purpose unto the Church. Most of us will prefer that the treasurer shall continue to keep a personal ledger account with each of us; but if there be any who desire that the amount of their tithe should not be known, let them render their account as unto the Lord."

"And God have mercy on the man who will lie to the Holy Ghost!" said Brother Saintly in tremulous tones.

"Will you include Brother Greene's suggestion in your proposition?" asked Randolph, after a moment of eloquent silence, addressing William Sprague.

"I will," replied the merchant, "and thank him for it. I am very grateful to Brother Crossley for directing our attention to this phase of the subject, which, I confess, I had overlooked."

"I think there can be no question," said Percival Hanley, rising to his feet, "that Brother Greene is correct. God alone can be the rightful guardian of his own storehouse, and none but the Holy Spirit can keep a correct record. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the good sense of our secretary's suggestion. Never do men more need the wise and careful precautions of the business world than when

they are handling the holy tithe of God's people. The treasurer will continue to protect himself, as he does now, by receiving the offerings, and opening the tithes and subscriptions in the presence of some other member of the Board. The people also should have constant knowledge of the financial status of the Church. There should be a monthly statement placed in the hands of each member or contributor, and an audited report at least once a year. This will be a satisfaction to ourselves; it will forestall possible criticism from unfriendly sources, and will enable us to vary the distribution of our tithes from month to month, as one or another object shall appear to be in need."

"Surely, 'in the multitude of counselors there is safety,'" said Randolph. "I have never known the people to fail of their duty when they were permitted to know the facts. Certainly, Brother Hanley's suggestion should be incorporated in the proposition."

"And now," continued the pastor, "it seems to me we are nearly ready to put the matter to a vote; but before asking for a motion, there may be a further question or two. If so—well, Cyril, what is it?" he asked, noticing a discussion among some of the young men.

"Why, we were just wondering, sir, whether our Young Men's Literary Club dues ought to be paid out of our tithes?" replied Cyril, somewhat abashed.

"Has any one an answer to give?" asked Randolph, pleasantly.

"I should rather say not!" answered Arthur Roberts, who had not yet spoken. "It strikes me, boys, that, between the reading-room, the free lecture courses, the gymnasium, the tennis courts, the baths, and the general club privileges, we get just about value received!" And so it struck the boys.

"I have been accustomed to pay my subscription for the Uplook out of my tithe; is that right?" asked Miss Crawley, a middle-aged lady, very good, but with a name for being "close."

"Now, really," replied Randolph, with a side glance at Percival Hanley, who was much amused, "I feel I get about six times the worth of my money; but if you regard the Uplook as a missionary enterprise needing help, I have no doubt you should take the amount from your tithe"—and Miss Crawley did not know whether to laugh or to be a little vexed, until she looked into her pastor's face; and then she smiled. Miss Crawley never laughed.

"What is a man to do if his family objects to his paying so much money into the Church?" asked Matthew Clark, a good man, but rather under the rule of a worldly-minded wife.

"I should say it is a man's business to do as the Apostle Paul enjoins, and rule well his own household," said Randolph, with a touch of sternness in his voice. "A man's first duty is to his God, and I

have never known a family that did not drift into worldliness and sin when the head of the house compromised the Word of God and his own convictions for the sake of peace at home."

Matthew Clark winced under the faithful words of his pastor. But he was brave at heart, and no man had ever doubted the reality of his religious experience. That night he renewed the consecration of his will to God.

"But what if husband and wife are members of different Churches?" asked Mrs. Mitchell, a sad-faced woman, whose husband was never seen with her at the house of God.

"It is always a grief to me," said Randolph, gently, "when husband and wife together can not say to the children, Come, let us go into the house of the Lord.' If conscientious reasons prevent a perfect union, and the family must continue to be divided against itself,—the answer, then, is perfectly clear: the tithe should be equally divided between husband and wife."

"How about the poor people who come to your door?" asked Mrs. Strong, a tender-hearted soul, constant in good works.

"We must simply remember this," answered the pastor, with quiet force,—“and some of us will need entirely to reconstruct our views on the whole subject of Christian giving,—the tithe is not a charity; it is an act of sacrificial worship unto God;

it does not come in the same class with ordinary gifts. We do not give our tithe at all; we pay it. But the poor, whom we shall always have with us, are to receive our gifts. They can not demand our help; it is theirs of grace. After God had provided all things needful for his children, things which the creature might demand even from his Creator—things which were his of right—then, to redeem us from our poverty and shame, ‘he gave his only begotten Son.’ ‘By grace are ye saved.’ So we, after we have rendered unto God our tithe, his right and our requirement, are ready to enjoy the exquisite blessing of giving. A gift that came out of our self-denial, even out of our own poverty, would carry with it what the poor require far more than our money; namely, our thoughtfulness and love. ‘Blessed is he that considereth the poor.’ Handing out a coin is a cheap way of giving help! That is not the way God considereth his children.”

The bright tears in Mrs. Strong’s eyes assured Randolph that her question had been answered.

“Are there any others who desire to speak?” he asked. “The hour is somewhat late, but we will gladly continue if any point remains to be cleared up.”

“A question, please, regarding the tithers’ pledge.”

John Christopher was a silent man; but his words, though few, were always the index of a meditative

mind. "I find myself somewhat questioning," he said, "as to the nature of the pledge, which, I understand, it is desired that we shall take. A pledge is a solemn thing. I can readily conceive of circumstances in which a tither would feel it his duty to use a portion of his tenth in supporting Christian work not included among the enterprises of his own Church or denomination. This would be exceptional; and yet unusual circumstances would justify it in the mind of any one of us. Should such circumstances arise, would it not be exceedingly awkward—to use no stronger word—for a man to feel that, either he must break a solemn covenant or else refuse to follow what he conceives to be the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit? Better no pledge, it seems to me, than one which might rob us of our liberty in Christ."

"In the days of the Restoration, under Charles II," answered Randolph, wistfully, "William Penn, that true-hearted but somewhat doughty Quaker, asked George Fox if he thought it was right for him to continue to wear a sword; to which the gentle Friend made answer, 'Wear it as long as thou feel'st at liberty to do so.' Remember one thing, brethren, and I am confident the action contemplated to-night will work only blessing and never hardship: as already suggested by Brother Greene, your covenant is not unto man, not unto the Church, but unto God. The taking of the pledge

is in lieu of the ordinary Church subscriptions, and simply means the declaration of your purpose. (Of course, this has no bearing upon whether or not you will pay your tithe unto the Lord; that is a matter of Divine law, and not of human covenant; the pledge relates only to the distribution of the tithe.) If, as you wait upon him in thoughtful prayer, God releases you from the covenant which you have made with him, there can be no breach of promise; and a simple notice to the treasurer, indicating your temporary or permanent change of purpose, keeps faith with all your brethren."

"But would this not be a loop-hole by which disaffected ones could easily escape the binding vows of Church membership?" somewhat doubtfully asked the secretary.

"Certainly," answered the pastor, and then added, laughingly, "but if a member is disaffected or back-slidden, and desires to escape the responsibilities of membership in the Church of Christ, he will crawl through a much smaller hole than this. In fact, Brother Strong, I would not call it a 'loop-hole.' I would call it an 'open door,' through which one is perfectly free either to enter or retire. God does not desire to govern us, as some boarding-schools are governed, by rules and proscriptions. There is a childhood of character that, doubtless, needs such helps as these; but—'when I became a

man, I put away childish things.' God seeks to govern us through our purified motives and our enlightened intelligence. In the long run, a man will not do what he does not want to do; the only righteous method of Church finance is that which is based on loyalty and knowledge."

"Thank you, Mr. Randolph," said John Christopher, heartily; "with such an understanding my last doubt has vanished."

"And mine also," said Percival Hanley. "And mine! and mine!" came from a dozen lips.

"I feel, Brother Randolph, that we are ready to vote," said Harrison Crossley. "The two considerations, which have been before us for the past three weeks, are: First, Does God require a tenth from his people? and Second, Is the Church the logical and Scriptural 'storehouse' which should receive and administer the tithe? On both of these points my mind is as clear as light. The main considerations seem to me beyond debate. There are sure to arise questions, more or less important, and some of them truly perplexing. A few have already been suggested, and doubtless others will develop. A little quiet thought, and especially a prayer to God for his wisdom, will enable us to know the mind of the Spirit. But these are mere matters of detail, questions of casuistry and not of conscience. It seems to me we should no longer delay

the hour, when, as a Church, we shall enter upon this new day in our history. I move, sir, that Brother Sprague's proposition, as amended and interpreted by the discussion of this evening, shall, beginning with the present month, be our basis of Church finance; and, further, that William Sprague, together with the treasurer and secretary of the Board, be constituted a committee to prepare a covenant, embodying the substance of that proposition; and this shall be the pledge of the Tithers' League of Trinity Church."

"I second that motion with all my heart!" said Matthew Clark, the light of a new determination in his kindly eyes.

"And I third it!" said Mrs. Christopher, excitedly, half rising, and then joining in the ripple of laughter that seemed to relieve the strain of the last hour.

John Randolph looked into the faces of his congregation, and understood why a pastor's love for his people is like a mother's for her child. Slowly he repeated, "All who are in favor, please stand upon your feet."

They did not rise in a body. Thoughtfully, one by one, as each recognized the solemn covenant into which he then was entering, they arose, until nearly all were standing.

"Let us bow our heads in silent prayer," said

the pastor, deeply moved. "Let us pray that God's Spirit shall seal the covenant which we make with him this night." The hush that followed was more vocal than song. Then, as by one impulse, burst forth—

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

How it swelled and thrilled! How it burst forth anew after the solemn benediction had been spoken, and hand grasped hand in Christian affection!

Brother Saintly stood wiping the happy tears from his eyes, when he suddenly found himself the center of a score of loving friends, each seeking to grasp the old man's hand. In the light which always follows obedience, the Holy Ghost had uncovered the gold of a pure and holy spirit, and the Church realized how rich they were while such a life came in and went out among them.

"You did it," said Mary Christopher, taking the withered hand in both of hers. "I don't mean the tithing; that is a very small part of it; but your prayers for the Church are answered."

The old man listened, and looked into the faces of his friends. And as he looked he laughed, and his eyes were as one who beheld a vision.

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his

apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?
I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

George Saintly did not speak; he only looked and laughed. Then taking his old gray hat, he silently left the church.

PART III.

THE PROMISE.

I will pour you out a blessing that there shall not be
room enough to receive it.

I have had many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have been able to place in God's, I still possess.—MARTIN LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

ARTHUR and Amy Roberts sat in the quiet of their ivied veranda. Another September day was drawing to its peaceful close. Arthur was reading aloud, while his wife embroidered a dainty bit of cambric.

"Well, Amy," said her husband, looking up with a fond glance, and smiling as he noticed that her eyes rested with a mother's longing upon the face of a beautiful babe, sweetly sleeping in a basket cradle just inside the door, "I do not wonder that you can not keep at your sewing. I'm so sleepy I can't even read. We talked too long last night after we came home from the recital."

NOTE.—Part III of the present serial does not attempt to expound Scripture, nor to develop any theory therefrom. The writer hopes that Part I has at least suggested God's will for believers with regard to property and income, and that Part II has developed the righteous relation of every true branch of the Church thereto. *Part III is a record of actual experience.* The incidents are grouped so as to preserve the unity of the narrative, while the names, of course, are fictitious. Otherwise there is no deviation from actual facts, personally known to the writer. "Elsie" was intimately known in the writer's family; the incident of the "piano" occurred in Boston, where a life of beautiful consecration to the Master, and an unusual musical career, were cut short by her sudden death.

H. R. O.

"And no wonder!" said Amy, enthusiastically; "I've been thinking about it all day. I can't get over Elsie Christopher! Did you ever hear anything like her playing of that E symphony from Liszt? I've studied it for years, and used to practice hard; but I never could do what Elsie did last night. And no piano at home, either; and only two hours a day at the college! I call it simply wonderful!"

"Maybe your talent lies in the direction of 'plain and fancy needle-work,' rather than music," said Arthur, playfully. "Elsie certainly did make her hands fly over the keyboard. But it was not her playing that I thought so much about; it was afterwards, when she sang that alto aria from the 'Messiah.' I have heard you praise her playing before; but I was entirely unprepared for the other. I had no idea we had such a voice as hers among our friends. There was something in it that made me feel the depth of those sorrowful words, and that is what I call the soul of music. When she sang 'He is despised,' I wanted to put my head on the seat and sob like a child."

"Did you speak to her after the recital?" asked Amy, presently.

"How could I, pray?" answered Arthur, the tender light in his eyes breaking into a twinkle of mirth. "With you girls hovering over her, and her mother

bedewing her with tears, there was little chance for ordinary mortals to get in a word."

"Arthur, you're—Why, I wonder if anything has happened!" said Amy, starting up, and hastening to meet Mrs. Christopher, who came hurrying through the garden, and waving a sheet of note-paper as she came.

"O Amy!" she burst out, as she ran up the veranda steps; "Elsie will get it after all—and Sam is so pleased—and she may be leaving next month—and we can't decide whether it shall be 'upright' or 'grand'—and—O Amy, I'm so happy I can't think!" and Mrs. Christopher sank into a chair in a rainbow of smiles and tears.

"Well, what ever can it be!" said Arthur, with affected concern. "From your description, I think you would better call it 'grand;' that's Amy's word."

"Arthur, I think you are too bad!" said Amy, struggling between laughter and curiosity. But the latter prevailed, as she took Mrs. Christopher's hand and coaxingly said, "Now, tell us about it."

"I will if I can get my wits together," said Mrs. Christopher, brushing away the happy tears. "You know about last night, and how glad we all were. I was perfectly content, for I knew Elsie had worked so faithfully and against so many disadvantages; but I never expected her to receive more than 'hon-

orable mention.' This morning Mr. Locke called, and said she had received 'honorable mention' for her playing, and—what do you think?—the Conservatory Scholarship on account of her singing. You know, that insures full musical tuition at the London Conservatory for a year. Mr. Locke is determined she shall go; he even guaranteed that, after the first year, she would be able to pay the balance of her expenses by singing in Church. We were talking about it at luncheon, when a special messenger came with this letter from her Uncle Sam,—John's brother, you know. He has had nothing to do with us for years. He fell out with John because he insisted on marrying a poor girl, instead of a rich one, as his brother had planned. He is very rich, and, I fear, very proud; but John has been perfectly independent of him, and I would not have asked help for the world—not even for Elsie's music. He was at the recital last night with his wife, who is really a lovable woman, though I have never known her well. I saw him looking at me in a strange way while Elsie was singing. Let me read you what he says in the letter—" but the words all ran together, and her voice choked. So Arthur gently took the sheet from her hand, and read aloud:

ELWOOD, Sept. 24, 190—

DEAR SISTER MARY,—I can not tell you how Elsie's singing moved me last night. I could see my sister Jenny in every motion, and hear her voice in every word. You

know how her untimely death broke all our hearts. I want you to forgive me for the coldness and neglect of these years. I happen to know of Elsie's plucky struggle against odds, and while I honor her, I deeply blame myself. Will you assure me of your forgiveness by permitting me to give Elsie a piano, any "make" she prefers, except it must be the best that money can buy? I have learned of her winning the Conservatory prize. I congratulate you and her. Will you grant me one more favor? After the year is ended, you will permit Elsie to finish her studies at my expense? I know I have no right to ask this; but will you generously grant it for Jenny's sake? Lottie and I will call to-morrow to receive from your own lips assurance of your forgiveness,—though, if I had listened to Lottie, we should have been friends years ago. I will consider it a privilege to know such a woman as I am convinced Elsie's mother must be, if only she will forgive, and receive into her friendship, her unworthy brother,

SAMUEL S. CHRISTOPHER.

"I've always believed Samuel Christopher had the heart of a true man," said Arthur, as he folded the letter and returned it. "I don't suppose you'll refuse so humble a request, will you?" he asked, smiling.

"I don't know about London," answered Mrs. Christopher, dubiously. "It seems so far away, and I don't see how I could get on without Elsie near me. But I shall not be selfish. You know it has come so suddenly, that Elsie hardly knows how to take it. If she desires to go, I shall help and not hinder, for it must be the hand of God upon us. But as for the piano"—Mrs. Christopher's face was

bright with happiness—"this is what we have been praying for for years,—not for the piano, but for friendship and love between the two families. John has always loved his brother, and the coldness during these years has been an unspeakable sorrow to him. This will be one of the gladdest days of his life. Elsie rushed away to his office to tell him, directly after luncheon; she could not wait a minute; and afterwards she intended going to 'Elwood,' her uncle's beautiful place near Lincoln Park, to thank him and to invite them both to dinner to-morrow. She has never yet been there, and she is so shy of strangers that I wondered when she herself proposed it. But Elsie has developed a wonderful strength and grace of character during the past year."

"Do you remember your struggle about the piano on her last birthday?" Amy asked, after a moment.

"Remember?" said Mrs. Christopher, with a holy hush in her voice, "Can I ever forget the day when Jesus cleansed my heart from pride and self-will?" and then, presently—"I can not understand what could have possessed me to want to buy one of those cheap pianos advertised in the newspapers. You know the Webster girls bought one just a year ago; they took the very one I had selected for Elsie. We were over there the other evening, and I was so sorry for them, though of course we said nothing. The piano is constantly out of repair, and

rattles like—like anything! Coming home, Elsie said she feared her 'touch' and 'ear' would have been ruined if she had been compelled to use it for her regular practice. It made me so ashamed when I remembered how set and determined I was to buy it for her. And now comes this present from her uncle. You know what that means, for John's brother never does things half way. It will be the choicest instrument he can find. It makes me all still within when I think how God has kept his promise, 'I will pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' I never dreamed of such a blessing as this when I yielded my will to him and we began to pay our tithe."

"Do you think all the Church will have 'Steinway Grands' showered upon them?" asked Arthur.

"No, for all do not want them, and fewer still could use them," said Amy; and then, looking towards the cradle with an almost infinite love, "I enjoy my little cabinet piano, but I would not exchange the 'blessing' God has given us this year for all the pianos money could buy. It seems to me goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; I don't think there ever could be such another happy home as mine."

Arthur's eyes were wandering dreamily from lilac to rose bush, and down beyond the myrtle hedge. "Unless my vision deceives me, Amy," he said, with mingled drollery and tenderness in his voice, "a

certain young lady whom we all admire will some day question the accuracy of that last remark of yours."

They followed the direction of his eyes, and a wistful look came into Mrs. Christopher's face as she saw Cyril McDermott and Elsie walking slowly toward them along the shaded path by the roadside, both engrossed in earnest conversation.

"Yes, I suppose so," she said, in answer to Amy's questioning glance. "She has said nothing to me, and yet I feel I know what is passing in her heart. But she is too young to think of such things," and Mrs. Christopher looked serious.

Arthur laughed merrily. "It is marvellous how forgetful we become! I have yet to hear of any land, Christian or heathen, where young people do not think of 'such things.' Longfellow says:

"'The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'"

The blue of Amy's eyes grew a shade deeper; but she did not speak until Cyril and Elsie were nearing the garden gate; then, musingly—"What an ideal life Elsie will have! music and travel and—Cyril's father left him quite a fortune, did he not, Arthur?"

"Yes," answered the latter, "but Harrison Crossley, his uncle, told me the other day that he will not come into his money until he is twenty-five. He is digging away in his uncle's chambers, reading law,

and copying briefs, as though his whole living depended upon it. McDermott is one of the choicest fellows I know." "Well, Cyril," as the young people came up the steps and joined them, "thank you for bringing us one whom the Conservatory Committee 'delights to honor.'"

CHAPTER II.

IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.

"YOUR Uncle Harrison and I met at luncheon to-day," continued Arthur, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, "and he said he was asking you this morning where a certain brief was, and you answered with a far away look, 'In the London Conservatory;' I can recommend the Loissette system for impaired memory, Cyril."

Arthur Roberts's nature was as open as the clear sky. Faber's lines were often on his lips,—

"I know not what it is to doubt,
My heart is ever gay!"

Often his blithe and happy spirit would sparkle into a merry jest; but his frolicsome words were never poisoned with a sting.

"That same Conservatory has now covered itself with lasting honor," answered Cyril, laughing, and taking a place on the settee next to Arthur, while Elsie found a seat on a low stool at her mother's feet.

Amy, thoughtful always, was beginning to pour the tea that, without seeming to have been ordered,

mysteriously made its appearance. "I need never look at my watch to know it is five o'clock," said Arthur, helping himself to a generous slice of nut cake, "Amy's tea is as regular as the sun." And then, presently, as the little company became thoughtful under the pressure of the day's events, he added:

"We have just been hearing of all the good things that have come to you, Miss Elsie, and we are almost as glad as you are. I did not have an opportunity of speaking to you last night, but I want to tell you how much we all appreciate what you have done."

"O, Mr. Roberts, don't say, please, 'What you have done,'" the rich color mantling her cheeks, "for truly it was not I. I know you mean it kindly, but—shall I tell them, mother dear, our little secret?" and Elsie looked into her mother's face with questioning eyes.

"Yes, dear, I think they will understand you now," replied Mrs. Christopher, softly.

"On my last birthday," began Elsie, half hiding her face in a sprig of late lilac which she held in her hand, "I had a very unhappy time. You know I was expecting a piano, and for weeks I had hardly thought of anything else. You remember Mr. Randolph's sermon, and how the Church began tithing soon after, and—well, every one knows all about it, and you know I did not get my piano! I told mother

it was all right, and I tried to think so; but when I went to my room that day, I just threw myself on the bed and cried and cried. The worst of it was I felt angry in my heart. I would not tell mother, for I knew she had been having a struggle herself, but in my own heart I said it was unjust. I began to feel so bitter that I became frightened at myself. I tried to pray, but I could not. Mother had given me a beautiful copy of the 'Messiah,' having the complete musical score, which I had long wanted. As I sat turning over the pages, and brooding over my disappointment, my eyes rested on the words of that aria I sang last night, 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,'—and then it all came over me,—my intolerable selfishness and pride and hardness of heart. It was not because we were poor and could not afford the piano, but I was murmuring because father and mother wanted to help take a little of the sorrow from the Savior's heart."

Elsie's lips were trembling, and the lilac had fallen to the ground.

"I had always thought I was a Christian, and I truly believe I was converted when a little child; but I never knew what an ugly, black thing sin is until that day. For the first time I understood why the Bible tells of the dreadful punishment that came because of murmuring. I was choked with grief,

and O how I prayed that God would take away the awful thing from me, for it was the same sin that caused the Jews to crucify Jesus. While I was praying and crying that day in my room, a wonderful quietness began to come over me, and then such a gentle, tender love for the Savior, and then gladness—O such gladness!”

Elsie's eyes were dancing as she spoke, and tears of joy were running down her mother's face.

“I ran down to tell mother, for I could not keep quiet,” continued Elsie, “and who should be there but dear old Mr. Saintly. When I told them about it, he just laughed and laughed—the way he always does when he is happy—and said it was the Holy Spirit who had come into my heart, to purify it and make it his own home. It seemed such a wonderful thing for him to do, that it made me very solemn for a little while. But, do you know, I think what Mr. Saintly said is really true, for it has been so easy this year to follow Jesus. People say I have done so much hard work; but I don't think so at all; it has been all so full of joy and gladness. I have just felt as though some strong, patient One were doing all the hard drudgery, while I was having all the enjoyment.”

“That makes me think of what President Porter used to say in his lectures on Psychology,” said Arthur, with an intent look on his face,—“that the

real boundaries of a human soul are defined by its capacity to do and to suffer; and he often reminded us that a person's ability to accomplish great undertakings was not measured by the power of his will, but by the intensity of his affections."

"I think the Bible makes it much easier to understand, when it says, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength,'" said Amy, and then—"But, Elsie, where did you get such power of expression? We all knew you had a splendid voice; but it is evident that none of us have realized how much there is in it."

Again Elsie sought her mother's face, and then answered, low: "Only mother knows about it, but I think I ought to tell. You remember that night when the Church met to form the Tither's League; it was just two days after my own wonderful blessing. When Mr. Randolph asked all to rise who were ready to bring their tithes into the storehouse, I thought I had nothing to give, and so I sat quiet. But, in a moment something whispered to me, 'Give Him what you have,' and I thought of my one little 'talent.' I'm afraid I was vain about my music, for I used to enjoy being praised in the presence of others, and—"

"It was the foolish pride of your mother, not yours, my daughter," interrupted Mrs. Christopher, with averted face.

"No, I know all the selfishness that was in my own heart," answered Elsie, stroking her mother's hand. "But I just rose right up, and while Mr. Randolph was praying I repeated those words of dear Miss Havergal,

"Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only for my King.'

The same gladness filled my heart again, and it was just as though some one were speaking within me, the words were so clear,—'He hath put a new song in my mouth.' For this entire year, when I have been practicing and when I have sometimes been asked to sing, I knew I was doing it for Jesus. Last night I was frightened when I stood alone before the audience at Memorial Hall; but while Mr. Locke was playing the soft notes of the prelude, I just asked Jesus to make me sing so that some one might know how he suffered for us—and then I forgot the audience and saw Jesus, and somehow I felt that I was singing only to him. . . . And, O mother, I must tell you, Uncle Sam was so gentle when I was there this afternoon; he talked to me as though he had always known me. He asked me to sing the aria again. As I was leaving he thanked me for coming—just think, Uncle Sam thanked me!—and said I had been God's voice to him; and Aunt Lottie whispered that they wanted to go with us to the prayer-meeting after dinner to-morrow night."

There was a momentary hush, broken presently by Arthur, who said, thoughtfully:

"If you have succeeded in winning your Uncle Samuel, you have done more than any minister or evangelist that has come to Trinity for the past twenty years. I remember him as the best Sunday-school superintendent we ever had; there was great disappointment among the boys when he resigned. He had some misunderstanding with the minister, I believe, and left the Church. How Brother Saintly will rejoice! He has always said that Samuel Christopher would some day come back again."

"What a really wonderful year it has been!" said Amy, deftly drawing the threads through the open embroidery work in her hands. "The revival of last winter seems to be still with us, and Mr. Randolph was saying that the prayer-meeting will have to be transferred from the vestry to the main audience-room. Have the trustees decided about adding the south wing, Arthur?"

"Yes; Percival Hanley told me that the funds are sufficient to start at once. It ought not to be delayed, for a number were unable to get seats last Sunday evening. But I really don't understand where the money has come from. When William Sprague failed last spring he was unable to meet the large subscriptions he had made, and yet the treasurer has actually enough in bank to push the work well toward completion, and the trustees are

going ahead in faith that the balance will be forthcoming before it is needed. The treasurer and I were posting up the books yesterday—you know this month ends the first year of our 'Tithers' League—and we were amazed to discover that we have given more during the past twelve months for home and foreign missions, education, the training-school, and other Christian work, than during the entire previous five years—and that without diminishing our funds for current expenses—while all the time the special subscriptions for building the south wing have been coming in from the most unexpected sources. Why, what do you think? Greene was telling me of a draft that came to him last month from James Calvert, who went to Australia eleven years ago, saying he wanted it used for permanent building improvements in 'Old Trinity.' I'm beginning to believe that Brother Saintly is the best financier on the Board. He says that as long as the Church continues to honor God and obey him, there will never be any lack in our financial resources, for the silver and the gold are all his, and he can send it to us from the ends of the earth. His words have surely come to pass thus far. The most skeptical are being convinced, and even old Farmer Shapleigh has stopped croaking. Mr. Randolph says he wishes all other Christian work were as easy as the getting of the money to support it."

"I'm afraid Brother Saintly won't be with us

long," said Mrs. Christopher. "Since his wife died he looks as though a breath would blow him away."

"Was n't it beautiful for him to see his own grandson the first missionary of our Church?" said Amy. "Harry Sheldon is rich indeed to have such prayers as his. Has any one heard from him since he sailed?"

"I received a post card, mailed from Shanghai, and Mr. Randolph has just received a long letter which he intends reading to-morrow night," answered Cyril.

"O, we must be sure to have all our Young People's Society present," said Elsie, enthusiastically.

"Do you know," spoke Mrs. Christopher, after a moment, "I find it hard to realize that our Church has been able to accomplish so much this year? And now we are going to support our own missionary in China, and we have n't had a bazaar, or entertainment, or even a Church social to help raise the money."

"I've almost forgotten we ever had such things," said Amy, musingly; "they seem to have dropped off like a loose garment."

"And I truly hope the garment will never be put on again!" said Elsie, emphatically. "I can feel my cheeks burn with shame even now when I remember what Mrs. Galbraith said the last time I asked her to buy a ticket; it was for the entertainment when we were raising money for the new pulpit furnish-

ings. She said they could not afford it, for they had used all their theater money in going to hear Sir Henry Irving in 'The Merchant of Venice.' "

"Some of the members said we would never hold our young people when we gave up the entertainments," remarked Mrs. Christopher.

Cyril McDermott looked up with an indignant flash in his eyes. "It is because they never knew or else have forgotten what young people are made of," he said. "Young fellows don't want to feel that they are being 'held;' that's what makes many of them so hard to move when we have revival-meetings. A true-hearted fellow does not want the Church to hold him, but to trust him. I know when I was converted I wanted a chance to do something and suffer something for Jesus; and when our Young People's Society was organized, we were in dead earnest to do something worth the doing, and nobody thought of 'socials' and 'entertainments' until some of the older members of the Church began to say that 'young people must be amused,' and 'boys will be boys,' and then, somehow, we lost interest and went in for fun. Fred Ferguson and I were talking about it last week, and Fred said he would like a chance to preach to the preachers. They get us all stirred up by telling us of the heroes and martyrs; of young men, in other days and in our own day, who have given up home and friends and even life itself, for the sake of Jesus and his work;

and then, when our blood is hot and we feel something within us that wants to bear the burdens of a world, somebody sets us to turning an ice-cream freezer or passing cake at a Church entertainment, and we are told it is 'doing something for Jesus!' Young fellows know it is all a hoax. Of course they will go in for the ice-cream; but all the time they wonder if the preacher meant what he said, and if 'following Jesus' means a real test of manliness as it did in other days. I asked Merrill to come with me to one of our entertainments a year ago—you know we were trying to get him to come to Church—and he said he did not like to be baited with cakes and amusements. 'When I go to Church,' he said, 'I want something different from what I see in the world every day. God's house is a holy place, and some of us club men, who do not make any religious profession, are hungry for holy ideals. Church people, who think they can win pleasure loving men by representing the religion of Christ as a soft and easy thing, are making a fearful blunder.'² I did not know how to answer him," concluded Cyril, "but somehow I felt he was right."

"Did you hear what Mr. Randolph said last Sunday night?" asked Arthur.

² This remark was made to the writer by Mr. H—, city attorney for E—, a brilliant young lawyer, but, by his own confession, unsaved.

"No, I went to Fourth Street Mission with Ferguson," replied Cyril; "what did he preach about?"

"He was preaching from that text which says, 'Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,'" answered Arthur. "What most impressed me was when he said it would be 'a sad day for the future triumph of the Church if our young people are cheated out of their birthright of tears, and do not learn the joy of bearing burdens.' He said 'a man's power of consecration is tested before he is twenty-five, and a young man is more capable of entering the pathway of an uttermost obedience than he will ever be in his life again.' He proved it by the records of war, exploration, and martyrdom, and closed by saying that the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions is a stern rebuke to the softness of older Christians, and a challenge to the loyalty of the entire Church."

Cyril's face grew strangely wistful. "How I envy the fellows who have a chance to endure a little hardness for Jesus Christ," he said. "There's Jimmy Wakefield; he walks to and from his work every day; he can not pay his tithe unless he watches every penny. He won't take the street-car, so that he can save the fare; and he is lame, too."

"I wonder if that explains why I see you two trudging along together every morning on my way to office," asked Arthur, with half-closed eyes.

The color deepened in Cyril's face as he answered, "Nonsense, Roberts; you know I must have my daily exercise, and Jimmy is capital company."

"Yes, I understand all that!" replied Arthur, with a deprecating cough; "but, I say, Cyril, is n't that your last season's coat? I'm amazed at you, my fastidious friend; and what is this I hear about Widow Sands's rent being paid for her so that she does n't go out washing any more? and—"

Cyril did not see the glorified look in Elsie's eyes, or he might have lost the presence of mind with which he replied, gayly,—

"Arthur, you should be made town-crier! You know I'm an extravagant fellow, and ought to be punished for spending so much on myself. I acknowledge I'm doing a little better than I used to do; but I wish I really could do something! What's a tithe? or two-tenths? or a half? Surely God wants something better than our money. Ever since Harry Sheldon sailed for China, I've felt so mean to be spending my life here; to be letting my light shine in the midst of a blaze, when I might be letting it shine in the midst of the thick darkness. Bishop Jackson told me that a young man in China to-day, especially a college man, is in the midst of an opportunity such as this world will never see again; and in India the cry for reapers is simply pitiful. In other fields the opportunity is as great. It seems to me a fellow with a little money coming to him has

no right to wait for the Missionary Society to send him, and . . . and . . .”

“Would you go, Cyril?” asked Arthur, laying his hand tenderly upon his shoulder. Cyril was watching a humming-bird as it darted through the yellow softness of the sunlight. Amy’s babe had wakened, and was cooing to the shining shadows on the wall. Elsie found her mother’s hand and pressed it nervously, while she tried to stop the trembling of her lips.

“Yes, if I thought Jesus Christ would accept me for a soldier,” answered Cyril, in a low voice, half catching his breath; and then, with a lifting of his head, “Yes, please God, I will.”³

³ From among the “Cyrils” of the writer’s intimate acquaintance, it would be invidious to choose.

CHAPTER III.

THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN.

"You may open the audience-room for the the meeting to-night, Carlson, I think we shall need it," said Randolph, late on Wednesday afternoon.

"I'll do it, sir, and right glad I am; my Hilda says that it is easier to cook for a big family than for a little one."

John Randolph stood for a moment at his study door, watching the deft strokes with which the faithful old sexton swept up a pile of autumn leaves. "If I could do my work as thoroughly as old Carlson does his," he mused, "what a glorious place Trinity would be! But fallen autumn leaves and fallen human nature can not be treated in the same way. There is a difference betw— Wrong I am!" with sudden eagerness, as the old man drew a match from his pocket and lighted the pile which soon was burning gaily, "God's fire will do what man can not accomplish. O Lord, let it fall upon thy Church: the Holy Ghost and the fire!" and Randolph closed his study door, and returned—but not to his books.

It was the 25th of September, 190—. Again the pastor stood looking into the faces of his people, and, as truly as did ever a mother to her children,

so he gathered them all in his heart. To pray for one, is to love him; and many an hour during the past year had Randolph spread the Church register before the Lord, pleading for every name among his people. It was just a year since the Tithers' League had been formed, and, by general understanding, the topic of the meeting was to be, "The Year's Blessings."

There was a tender suggestiveness in the first hymn,

"And are we yet alive,
And see each other's face?"

Prayer followed, spontaneous, familiar, full of the fragrance of gratitude, and winged with praise. Another song of "the heavenlies;" then followed the sixty-seventh Psalm. Randolph's comments were brief, but packed:

"This psalm has been called 'The Old Testament Paternoster.' It is distinctly Pentecostal. Its key is, 'Blessed to Bless.' It was a harvest thanksgiving song of the Jews, and preserved to them the covenant of God with Abraham, 'I will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing.' It is a prayer for the mercy and blessing of the Lord, and is conscious at first only of personal need. But the prayer most crowded with yearning to be filled oneself, is the prayer most filled with blessing to the ends of the earth. The largest offering a man can make for the world's speedy evangelization is not to give, but to

get—to get the shining of the Lord in his own soul; for if it be the true shining, the shining that comes from burning, then will it touch into living flame a thousand lives. He will project into the spiritual realm a vital force which will make it easier for men everywhere to know God's 'saving health.' And this, who wants it most can have."

"And now, dear friends," continued the pastor, "the life of burning and of blessing is also the life of business. Our special theme to-night is testimony concerning God's faithfulness. Some have asked, 'Can I afford to pay a tenth?' I think you will be asking to-night, 'Can I afford not to do it?' Some of you may remember that a little over a year ago, I made a public statement to this effect, that—'If any Christian who has never tried it [i. e., paying to God his tithe] will make the experiment, conscientiously following it through to the end in prosperity and in adversity, we predict for him two surprises: First, he will be astonished at the increased amount which he is enabled by this method to give to the Lord; and, secondly, he will be astonished at the increased spiritual and temporal prosperity which the Lord will give to him; for observe that here is an instance where the Lord actually makes a challenge to his people, and sets up a test case, saying, 'Prove me now.'"¹

¹ From "God's Tenth," by the late Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D., of Boston.

"I have no doubt many of you are anxious to tell of God's faithful blessing, but before throwing the meeting open, permit me to call your attention to two or three items of general interest. First, notice the treasurer's report, printed copies of which have been distributed in the seats. Take them home with you; they will be exhilarating reading to those who know what it means to face a Church deficit at the end of a year. As I try to take in the meaning of these magnificent totals, I am reminded that in nearly every instance it has meant prayerful self-denial. But God has multiplied it into blessing a thousand fold for ourselves and for others. Let me also read a letter just received from our Missionary Secretary:

"NEW YORK, Sept. 20, 190—

"REV. JOHN RANDOLPH, B. D.:

"*My Dear Brother*—We have received communication from Shanghai advising us of the safe arrival of Mr. Harry Sheldon, whose outgoing expenses were assumed by the Missionary Board, but whose salary will be met, according to agreement, as a "special gift" from Trinity Church. I desire again to thank the members of Trinity for their generous zeal. I note from the partial report of your treasurer that you have already sent to this office more than your apportionment for our world-wide work, and that *in addition* to your pledged and first quarter's payment of a "special gift" for the support of your own missionary. I am intensely interested in the "Tithers' League" of which you speak. We have made a computation from the figures at hand, which convinces us that if other churches could be prevailed upon to do as Trinity Church has done, and pay their tithes honestly into the

work of God and the Church, our missionary appropriations could be multiplied *fifteen times over*, and all other Christian work at home increased in proportion.² How our people can look the facts in the face and withhold God's portion is to me a profound mystery. My great fear is that they have been kept in ignorance of the facts.

“Very sincerely yours,

“LEONARD C. DURBIN, Missionary Secretary.”

“You will also be glad to know,” continued the pastor, “that I have received a letter from our brother, Harry Sheldon. It is too lengthy to read entire tonight, but one paragraph will show what is in his mind. I will reserve the balance to read next Wednesday evening, which, I need not remind you, is the first Wednesday of the month, and our regular missionary prayer-meeting. He says:

“I want you also to know that the fact of your sending me, as your own special representative, has been already a great strength and blessing to me. Some of the older missionaries have told me sadly that when one has been in a foreign land for a few years, although the Missionary Society continues to send him his support, he feels cut off from the home Church, and alone. Even his own brothers in the ministry seem to forget about him—“Out of sight, out of mind.” The first enthusiasm soon wears away, and then it is so easy to fall into missionary ruts. His life is sapped by the people whom he serves, who have everything to receive and nothing to give. He has no warm,

² This estimate is based on the statistical reports of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 1900, and the known average of income *per capita* throughout the United States. The average for other Churches in the United States and England, and for *European congregations* in India and other mission fields, will not vary in great degree from the above.

vital connection with the throbbing centers of Christian life at home, but must contend single-handed against age-long heathenism, and against strange diseases, besides all the besetments of our common humanity, and often separated even from wife and children. And then, when he is worn with the endless work and with the weariness of his soul, some jaunty globe-trotter, bristling with ideas and brisk with travel, dashes past his mission station, "studies" the situation [*sic!*], and writes to the home papers that the work would move more rapidly if the missionaries themselves had more religion! My heart has been so filled with desire to make our home Churches feel their *individual* and *personal* relation to the great world-field. The fact that Trinity is responsible for my monthly allowance makes me feel that you will pray for me even as you do for Mr. Randolph, for am I not pastor of *Trinity out-station*? Believe me, for I have already learned it—more than anything else a missionary needs *the prayers of friends at home.*"

"May we not sing Harry's favorite hymn?" asked Cyril McDermott.

"Most assuredly," answered the pastor, "and, as we sing, let us commend him to God's special grace and blessing." "We Would See Jesus" was the hymn. As the sweet melody rose and fell, and the sweeter words, it was not hard to realize the oneness of Christ's Church throughout the world.

"And now what has been your personal experience?" asked Randolph. "Does God really keep his promises to those who bring their tithes into his storehouse? The meeting is open for all who desire to speak."

Scarce had the pastor ceased, when Gustav Schwan, a young German, was on his feet. He had been converted but a few months, but from his first experience the mystic philosophy of his Teuton blood had made the Word of God a real fact in his life. He spoke with a strong German accent, which added somewhat to the unique interest of his testimony:

"I am so glad, Mr. Randolph, that you have given us a chance to tell what God has done. I was converted the 14th day of last February, and, in March, I began to pay my tithe unto the Lord. You know I have a shop in Katherine Street, not so large as some, but growing larger. Two months ago trade was very dull. Nobody came to buy. To make matters worse, my stock was running very low. I could not collect certain large bills that were due. I had no credit at the wholesalers, and only a very small balance in the house with which to conduct the business and buy food for Margy and the children. I looked into our 'Lord's box' where we keep our tithe, and found that we had a considerable sum which had been accumulating, a little at a time. At first I thought I would borrow the Lord's money—"

"Better not try that if you want to keep out of trouble!" interrupted Roger Greene; "that's what the law calls 'embezzling.'"

"Well, I did n't borrow it!" said Gustav, with emphasis. "But I suddenly made up my mind what I would do. I gave Mr. Randolph two-thirds of the

amount to send to China to support a little orphan boy in one of our schools, and the rest I sent to the treasurer for our Church expenses. It seemed to me just like this: 'God will look down and see His box empty; he must have money to supply his work, so he will begin to fill his box again; and while God is filling his box, I will be getting the business.' Perhaps I was selfish, but that is how it looked to me. And sure enough that very morning a gentleman called and paid a large bill, saying something had reminded him as he was passing that way. Two more remittances came that day by post, and a large number of cash orders followed, some large and others small. In three days I was able to replenish my stock, paying cash for all I bought, my business was greatly increased, and Margy and I had turkey for dinner! But best of all, the dear Lord's box was almost full again. I have proved that tithing is good business for a young man just starting for himself."³

"That is refreshing!" said Randolph, heartily. "Brother Gustav has already told me the circumstances. I think his method of expending his tithe immediately for God's work, and in the face of his own great need, is the kind of a challenge that our God delights to honor."

"My heart is so full of gladness that you must let me be the next to speak." It was Miss Hubert, the

³ The writer vouches for this incident in all of its details, it being the experience of T—S—, a former parishioner.

gentle-faced deaconess, whose unselfish devotion penetrated the whole Church as silently but as persistently as a sunbeam.

"When I promised a year ago to pay my tithe, I was in no little perplexity. You know we deaconesses do not receive a stated salary, we are simply promised our support—and this does not always come in the form of money. I saw that if I were really to give my tenth, or at least approximate it, I must relinquish something deemed necessary for my actual maintenance. I confess there was a little struggle, but presently I received great blessing in forming the resolution to buy no more fruit for my own use. For a year God has helped me to keep this resolution—though fruit, especially oranges, is medicine and life to me—and I have been able to save out of my allowance quite a modest sum for his work. I would say nothing about it at all, only I must tell you of God's constant goodness. For this entire year not a week has passed—actually, not one—but that some one has been sending me fruit; such luscious berries and grapes and other fruit in season, but mostly it has been oranges, and such fine ones! better than I could ever afford to buy for myself. I have tried to give up a little for Jesus' sake, but he won't let me! His blessings have overtaken me, and surrounded me at every step; and whenever I have tried to give him something in return, he has given it back, and O in such wonderful measure, 'pressed

down, and shaken together, and running over.' He has crowned the year with his goodness, and his paths drop fatness."⁴

Miss Hubert's testimony brought out an interesting response. Many during the year had been moved to send fruit, some who could not account for the unusual interest they had begun to feel in the welfare of the Trinity deaconess. "I was almost sorry that I mentioned it," said Miss Hubert afterwards; "it was such a delicious secret between God and myself. But I am sure others were blessed to know about it, and—well, there are other secrets which I have not told."

Then followed a score of testimonies, bright with Christian praise. They were not all, nor mostly, expressed in terms of temporal blessings. There was the unspoken conviction, like the diapason tones of a great organ, that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." A number of those who had within the year found Christ, were definite in their witnessing to a clear Christian experience. Some of the older members spoke with the enthusiasm of young converts. Matthew Clark returned thanks for the atmosphere of a Christian home more precious even than the house of God. Amy Roberts spoke

⁴ The experience of Mrs. —, of New York, whose Sunday-school publications are widely popular, privately related to the writer.

with womanly grace of a year's unalloyed gladness. "I have wondered," she said, "how mothers dare look for obedience in their own children as long as there remains in their own natures one atom of disobedience to the whole revealed Word of our Father. Our children are ours in spirit more than in flesh and blood."

Cyril McDermott was the first of several young men who testified to the power of God in a young man's life. Said one of them: "We have found God's service a keen delight, and some of us never knew before what exhilaration there is in cutting expenses for the sake of 'gearing' the devil. There has been more real excitement of soul in taking hold of God's plans and watching the answers to our prayers, than any football rush we have ever seen, or any day on the golf links that we've ever spent."

Randolph was quick to follow: "Real excitement! There you have it! Young people must have movement. It leaps in their blood, and tingles in their nerves; and any Church that disregards the natural demands of youth will one day close its doors and die, and deserve to die! I have never yet found it in my heart to berate young people for going to the dance, the card-table, and the theater. They do not stop to ask, 'Are these things good?' All they seek is an outlet for the high-mettled life within them. It is there, and the Church of God must give

it vent. No, not by a weak effort to pattern after the world! Think not, I pray you, that young men and women who have had a taste of the intoxicating cup of this world's pleasure will ever be taken captive by the flabby efforts of the Church to provide them with 'harmless amusements.' The Church is awkward in the habiliments of the world. But call our youth up into the hills of God. Let them know the high daring of those who storm the citadel of Satan. Speak to them of the eternal youth of God, who 'rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,' and let them see the red heart's blood of the young Man of Nazareth and Calvary. And will they follow? Ay, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of the age! It has been always so. Do you wonder that Garibaldi was able to recruit his legions of young men for the cause of free Italy? 'What are your inducements?' they asked; and the answer was with the thrill of certain conquest, 'Poverty, ostracism, sickness, battles, wounds, and—victory!' Hear the words of Wendell Phillips, 'Men marvel at the uprising which hurled slavery to the dust; it was young men who dreamed dreams over patriot graves!' Give our boys and girls a chance! God pity the Church whose youth have not beheld the face of Jesus Christ, and who have not learned the glory of the life that is and shall be."

As Randolph ceased, Elsie's rich voice rose on the

eagle wings of song, and Bishop Heber's thrilling hymn of holy war swelled from the congregation:

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?

Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below—
He follows in His train.

A noble army, men and boys,
The matron and the maid,
Around the throne of God rejoice,
In robes of light arrayed.

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain:
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD.

THE congregation was so lifted into "the heav-
lies," that, as the song died away, they scarce heard
the timid voice of Miss Crawley saying:

"May I add my testimony now?"

Encouraged by a sympathetic smile, she continued:
"I did not know a year ago how things would be with
me to-night"—the gentle spinster had lost the most
of her income through the failure of a local bank—
"but I want to say that God has provided for me in
ways that I knew not of, and the few hundreds that
I had been able to give for the building of Fourth
Street Mission Chapel I regard as my one safe invest-
ment. That is beyond the reach of failure, and brings
sure interest every month."¹

"My testimony is that the promise of God through
Malachi is as literally true to-day as it ever was for
all who will bring their tithes into the storehouse."
Roger Greene had risen with his open Bible in his
hand. "Let me read God's Word immediately fol-

¹ A widow, once wealthy, but since reduced, and for whom
God has raised up many strong friends, has repeatedly spoken
the above words to the writer concerning the building of Me-
morial Hall, E—.

lowing the promise of the opening of the windows of heaven, in Mal. iii, 11: 'And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.' Now that is a literal promise, and I do not see why farmers, at least, can not claim a literal fulfilment. At any rate such has been my experience this last year."

"As some of you know," continued Roger Greene, "I do not use all my land for dairy pasturage, but have about twenty acres planted to corn. The first time I plowed round last spring, after the corn was up, I noticed a worm had attacked the roots. I knew what that meant, for there's no saving a field if it is once attacked. I just kneeled down right there in the furrow, and told the Lord it was his field and his corn; that I had hoped to use the tithe of that field as a 'special gift' for our mission work in Africa, and that if it was his will for me to do so, he would rebuke the devourer according to his promise. I waited on God until I felt confident that my prayer was heard, and then finished my plowing without any misgiving. At the second plowing, three weeks afterwards, the worm had entirely disappeared, nor has it since returned—and next month, God willing, I shall have as fine a husking as this county has ever seen. It is to me

all the more remarkable when I remember that my field is the only one that escaped the pest. "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." ²

Old Farmer Shapleigh had listened with open mouth and eyes. His broad acres, which immediately adjoined the dairy farm of Roger Greene, had been visited by the pest, and his crops seriously damaged. He appeared touched by his neighbor's testimony, for he leaned over to Percival Hanley, and whispered: "Nothing was said last year about saving crops. I enjoy religion, too; and if I had been told all about this tithing business, I think I might have risked it myself. Pity to lose all that fine corn!" Percival Hanley turned, half in amusement, half indignant; "God has no promises," he said, "either temporal or spiritual, for men who will not obey in the dark as well as in the light. When you are ready to serve God 'for naught,' then you may begin to think of the increase that comes from tithing. I advise you, however, not to experiment until then; God knoweth the heart, and he is not seeking yours, but you."

While this side colloquy was passing, Lloyd Rowe had risen. He was a colporteur for the Bible Society, whose journeyings took him to all the adjoining towns and villages. His track of light was apparent in all parts of the county.

² This experience of C— B—, a farmer of Edgar County, Illinois, is vouched for by his pastor, who related it to the writer.

“Early in the year,” he said, “our hearts were greatly stirred over the famine in India. We had already given our tithe—for I would sooner think of robbing the Bible Society than the God who gave us the Bible—but so burdened were we that one night my wife and I kneeled down, rededicated to him our lives, and asked what more we might give for the starving poor of that desolate land. It came to us that we might give our horse and surrey (I could manage to make my trips on foot as the Savior did); and then we had a milk-fed pig which we had raised; these we offered to the Lord for India, besides an additional gift in money which we had managed to save. The horse, surrey, and pig sold for a generous sum, which, added to the cash offering, made a very gratifying total which we were able to send. Now listen to the sequel: Before the one pig was sold, a friend who knew nothing of our intention had brought us another; my brother asked me if I would take his horse and surrey off his hands and use them, for the keep, as long as I desired; and, in addition, there have come to us from unknown sources sums of money as ‘special gifts,’ greater in amount than that which we ourselves had given. Brethren, I have ceased to marvel. Our God is alive! The very hairs of our head are all numbered, and not a sparrow falls on the ground without our Father. Let us get to living in the old Book—fresher than the

latest magazine, more filled with the romance of history and life than any novel ever written.”³

“I’ve found him a better banker than any earthly one,” said Matthew Clark, without rising.

“I am reminded of a story of Dean Swift,” said Kandolph, “which is certainly apropos. Being asked to preach a charity sermon, he mounted the pulpit, and, after announcing his text, ‘He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord,’ simply said: ‘Now, my brethren, if you are satisfied with the security, down with the dust.’ He then took his seat, and an unusually large collection was taken. O brethren, if the Christian people of Great Britain and the United States were satisfied with the ‘security’ thus offered, and would ‘lend’ their money unto the Lord in Scriptural measure, Christian schools and colleges would soon receive princely endowments, the missionary work of the Churches would measure up to its marvelous opportunity, and this whole round world could be shot through with gospel light within ten years.”⁴

“I feel I should not withhold my testimony,” said Harrison Crossley in a clear voice. “Most of you know that I am counsel for the Southern Railway; but perhaps some of you do not know that a man in such

³ Literally and exactly true; the experience of an intimate friend of the writer, the Rev. —, of the Illinois Conference.

⁴ Statement of Dr. Northrup before the American Baptist Union in 1890, based upon figures prepared by Dr. Angus, of Regent’s Park.

a position has almost constant opportunity to receive fees for keeping his eyes shut as well as open. The most signal blessing that has come to me during the past year is the strong persuasion that every penny of my income must be holy, if God's tithe is to be kept holy. I have not hesitated on every proper occasion to let this be known to all who have been accustomed to engage my services. A recent incident may help some of our young men to know that the business world, with all its shrewdness, still prizes integrity and clean dealing, and that a man never knows when he is on trial.

"About three months ago a memorandum was sent in by the company requesting me to make the proper application for a license to sell liquor at one of the railway station restaurants. 'Curious,' I said, 'that they should send this to me when they know so well my convictions regarding the use of liquor,' and I returned the memorandum unanswered. After a week I received another urgent communication, with a rather testy postscript that I was neglecting the company's business. An acquaintance happening to be in my chambers at the time, I remarked the unusual request of the company, when he said: 'Well, Crossley, I would n't risk my appointment with the company for so small a matter as a railway liquor license; if you don't do their business, some one else will.' 'Come now,' I said, 'I did n't like the looks of this before; but it smells of sulphur now,' and I imme-

diately sent the company a blank refusal to be instrumental in any way in the procuring of the license. I heard nothing more about the matter until last week, when I happened to be lunching with the secretary of the Board of Directors. He said to me, laughingly, 'I have to thank you, Mr. Crossley, for being the occasion of my winning quite a wager.' 'What do you mean?' I asked. 'Do you remember that correspondence we had regarding the procuring of a liquor license?' 'Certainly.' 'Well, I had a wager with our chief auditor that you would refuse it, just as you did.'"⁵

"I do not mean," concluded the attorney, "that paying my tithe has made me more honest, but it has emphasized, with tremendous earnestness this thought, that my business is the Lord's, and dare not be conducted after the manner of the world. It has also convinced me that God will look after our interests if we will look after his.

" 'Fix on the Lord thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done.' "

As Harrison Crossley resumed his seat, some cast their eyes hesitatingly in the direction of William Sprague. The merchant seemed to feel the expectancy of the meeting, and rose slowly to his feet.

⁵ This incident is related *verbatim* as it was told the writer by Mr. —, king's counsel, an eminent barrister of London, and the leader of a far-reaching religious movement.

"I can testify with a glad heart that God is mindful of his children: 'His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.'" The merchant's words were listened to with intense interest. The failure of the firm had been widely heralded, and the critics had more than once wagged their heads.

"Never more than during this past year have I been assured that my business is in the hands of the Lord." William Sprague spoke with the same precision and force that he had always used; to-night there was an added eloquence that came from the burdens that had been upon him. He continued: "To me this has been a year of surprises. I need not now refer to what the public are already familiar with. The fire and flood that so paralyzed my business have burned and swept away many of my false ideas of human security. I realize, as I never did before, what is our life: 'It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' Truly hath the wise man said, 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water.' It has been a time of testing; but, with all the anxiety, the only sorrow I have had has been that I have been unable to help forward the work of God as I had planned. For myself there has been no fear. I have regarded myself as a steward only; the business has been the Lord's, either to increase or to diminish. I desire to return thanks for the good hand of my God upon me; perhaps, through his great

mercy, I shall yet be able to redeem all my pledges. But whether that shall be or not, God's tithe, be it small or great, still remains the first claim against the firm of William Sprague and Company."

"May I crave the privilege of a word or two?"

It had indeed been a year of surprises, but none so great as this. Samuel Christopher, president of the City National Bank, had been sitting by the side of his brother since the beginning of the meeting. As he arose to his feet every ear was strained to hear what he might say.

"I think it due to William Sprague and to this Church," began the banker, "to say that never has he commanded the confidence of his business associates more than he does to-day. I am in a position to speak, and I desire to say it publicly, that William Sprague's credit in the banks of this city is absolutely untouched by the reverses of the past year, and I can assure his friends, with more emphasis than his own modesty has permitted him to use, that his return to financial power will be more speedy than has been commonly supposed. I think it is proper that I should at this time supplement his remarks with a more extended statement.

"When the firm of William Sprague and Company reported itself to the court as in pressing straits, the City National Bank was appointed receiver. After looking into the accounts, we were convinced that the business could be saved, and, with the con-

sent of the creditors, asked Mr. Sprague to act as manager until he could recover himself. This he consented to do. When the monthly accounts were audited, we discovered that ten per cent had been paid over to an account entered as, 'The Lord's Tithe.' We remonstrated with him that he was not managing the business for himself, but for his creditors; and he ought not to divert any portion of the profits from the liquidation of the debts of the firm. He replied that if the creditors were dissatisfied with his management, he was ready at once to yield to their desires, and turn the business over to any one whom they might designate; but that, in spite of its reverses, the firm was still under Christian management, and, as long as he continued at its head, he was not at liberty to disobey the command of God. He could not be swerved a hair; and, in spite of the captious criticisms of some who took occasion to fling at 'religion' and 'Pharisees,' he has remained unshaken. I marvel at the providence of God, for to no other source do I attribute the unprecedented success of Mr. Sprague's management. At the end of six months he has been able to settle all claims, and we shall be able to make complete report of our receivership at the October sessions. I am speaking the cold language of finance when I say that this city has not seen so rapid a return to financial solvency after disastrous reverses as in the case of William Sprague and Company. By the first of January

the firm will be as strongly entrenched as ever, and even more so, and on 'change men's faith in the faithfulness of God has been distinctly augmented. A man with such a God behind him simply can not fail.⁶

"But I did not come here to-night to speak for William Sprague—he needs no apologist—but to ask the forgiveness of this Church, as I have already asked the forgiveness of my God, for the backslidings of these past years. Since I turned away from the house of prayer, the faith of my younger manhood has been almost lost. I speak only to the praise of God, and not of man, in testifying that William Sprague's unswerving loyalty to the truth has broken, as with a hammer, the stony unbelief of my heart. Two—nights—ago," the words halted as the strong man sought to control the trembling of his voice, "I saw once more—the face of Him whom I have despised and rejected; and, if Mr. Randolph will receive one who has so sinned against God and the Church—I desire this night to come back again to my Father's house."

John Randolph's hand was reached forth, as the hand of a strong man to help a little child, and Samuel Christopher and his wife, with bowed heads, met him at the chancel. Just a clasp of the hand;

⁶ The case of "William Sprague" is true in all details, and was related to the writer by the late Rev. W. A. Spencer, D. D., of Philadelphia, Corresponding Secretary of the Church Extension Society.

just a word of affectionate greeting, and the doors of the Church swung inward to receive her returning children. As they left the altar, Brother Saintly arose. His form was bent and wasted, the white hair had fallen over his sunken temples; but his eyes shone with the glory, and his face was as the face of John the Divine in the island of exile. Two hands were laid trembling upon the shoulder of husband and wife in holy blessing:

“‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy Word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’ Twenty years ago, Samuel, God gave me the answer to my prayer, that I should not taste of death until you and your house should return unto the way of your fathers, and ‘the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness.’” Then turning to the congregation, as Samuel Christopher pressed the aged hands and resumed his seat, the old man continued:

“This means the breaking up of the fallow ground. When God has broken one heart he is breaking many, for he is not a respecter of persons. ‘There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven for thy help, and in his excellency on the skies.’ Have you not heard the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees? Do you not remember the word of the Lord by the prophet, saying:

“‘I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh,
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams?’”

“Ah, it is come, and it is coming! I see the Church of God redeemed from pride and self. Our young men and women have beheld the vision of a world-conquering Christianity, yea, and within another generation! Their faith is tunneling the mountains and bridging the rivers. And will the Church fail them in the day of their asking? No, my brethren, it can not be. A revival is coming! Not to our congregation only, but to the Church of Christ throughout the earth; not a season of blessing merely, but a ground-swell of God Almighty's power—Jehovah pleading with his people, and Zion travailing in bitter birth-pains for the glory that shall be.”

Brother Saintly's voice was faint with weakness. For a moment his body tottered as though it would fall, and Randolph hastened to his side. But the momentary dizziness passed away, and he stood with one hand resting affectionately on the strong arm of his young pastor. It was as Moses, the servant of the Lord, departing into the mountain of Nebo, and Joshua, the son of Nun, his minister. John Randolph was quick to discern the spirit of prophecy that rested upon the aged saint as his trembling feet drew near

to the City. His own soul swelled with the tumult of desire. In that hour he entered and passed through the spiritual crisis of his life. With a look of triumph that his people never forgot, Randolph turned, and said:

“Brother Saintly is right, thank God! I feel it, though I do not see it all to-night. O friends, I can not tell you the agonies through which my soul has passed. In the midst of all my toil, in the days of study and in the nights of prayer, one question has ever stared me in the face, ‘Can the Church be revived?’ O I do not refer to the ‘revival efforts’ with which we are all familiar—not a ‘Methodist revival,’ nor a ‘Baptist meeting,’ nor a ‘Church mission.’ But a revival of righteousness! A cleansing from sin! A revival that will sweep worldliness out of the Church, and drive back the tide that is crowding the supernatural out of the world! It is a solemn question and a practical one, and according as a man answers it to his own deepest thought will depend the ‘tone’ of his service, the spiritual ‘fiber’ of all his work for God. In the light of history, and knowing the thousand divisions and heresies in the Church of Christ; remembering the many disintegrating forces at work within her borders, and recalling the deplorable fact that many of these emanate directly from unsanctified and even unbelieving pulpits; knowing that the Church has thus

grown slack and carnal in spite of an open Bible and hallowed traditions; and noting especially the significant fact that heresy, schism, and worldliness are not confined to any one branch of the Church, but exist to an alarming degree in every denomination—the question is a deeper one than the thoughtless enthusiast is accustomed to discern. Can the Church be revived? Or, must the final word be spoken, as many spiritual-minded men have spoken it, ‘Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone?’

“This is bitter truth, if indeed it be all true. Can you not see how a conviction such as this must weigh like lead upon the heart of a pastor, especially as he looks out over the broad fields of human need? If the Church can not be revived, if things must go from bad to worse, as many good men are teaching to-day, until the Lord comes in the fierceness of his wrath to cut short the work in righteousness, then my courage fails, and my hands drop nerveless to my sides. Why should I dash my body against an adamant wall? Why should I wear my life away in vain efforts to accomplish the not-to-be? The only thing for me to do is to watch and wait for his coming, and to rescue from the wreck of time a few who float within my reach. But the world, I can not help it. There is no need to bend my back under the burden of its sorrow, and no call for me to yield up my life to redeem it from its sins. I may indeed win souls; but

it will be the sifting out of the remnant who are ready to be saved; it will not be the strong compulsion that melts down wicked hearts."

John Randolph was taking out the very core of his own heart; and his people saw and understood.

"Brother Saintly," he said, "I do not know why our tithers'-meeting should be ending thus—unless the Lord our God would remind us that the relation of 'money' to the 'kingdom' is very close, and to let us know that it is but a short step from the things which are seen and temporal to the things which are not seen and eternal. The mists seem to be passing away, and to-night I am with Habakkuk in the watch-towers of God:

"The vision is yet for the appointed time,
And it panteth toward the end,
And shall not lie;

Though it tarry, wait for it,
Because it will surely come;
It will not delay.'

"The revival is coming—epoch-making, world-wide, a more than Lutheran protest against Churchism of every sort, a more than Wesleyan revival of 'the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.' The Church will not disappoint her Lord. He will come again, our Christ and King; I believe he may be coming soon—but not yet, not yet! Before the clouds grow radiant with the glory of bringing back the King, they will empty their already bursting blessings upon

the waiting Church; fickle, faint-hearted, froward, and yet, for all that, still the Bride of Christ, who loved her and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word; that he might present her to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot nor wrinkle.

“’Tis coming up the steep of Time,
And this old world is growing brighter.
We may not live to see the dawn sublime,
But high hopes make our hearts throb lighter.
We may be sleeping in the ground,
When it awakes the world with wonder,
But we have felt it gathering round,
And heard its voice of living thunder,
’Tis coming! Yes, ’tis coming!”

AND THEY HEARD A GREAT VOICE FROM HEAVEN
SAYING UNTO THEM: COME UP HITHER.

—THE REVELATION.

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THE MAINTENANCE AND EXTENSION OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD,
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Grant Road Methodist Episcopal Church, Bombay.**

AMOUNT ENCLOSED Rs. _____

THIS AMOUNT IS TO BE APPLIED AS UNDER :

	Rs.	a.	p.
I. FOR CHURCH SUPPORT :			
* 1. FOR THE STEWARDS' FUND
2 FOR THE TRUSTEES' FUND
3. FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
II. FOR CHURCH WORK :			
1. GRANT ROAD CHURCH :			
A : THE MISSIONARY UNION
B : DEACONESS WORK (<i>Epworth League</i>)
C : THE RELIEF FUND
2. BOMBAY M.E. CONFERENCE :			
A : THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY
* B : THE CONFERENCE CLAIMANTS
C : THE MISSION CLAIMANTS
D : THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
3. SPECIAL :			
A : THE BIBLE SOCIETY (<i>Bombay Aux'Try</i>)
B : THE SEAMEN'S REST, BOMBAY
C : THE ANG. IND. ORPHANAGE, POONA
D : THE INDIA S. S. UNION
E :
F :
TOTAL

*NOTE.—Unless otherwise specified, all tithes and offerings will be applied **FIRST** for the Stewards' Fund of Grant Road Church (i.e. ordinary monthly expenses, including pastor's support, servants' wages, lights, petty repairs, printing, etc.) and **SECOND** for the Conference Claimants, (i.e. superannuated preachers, and the widows and young children of deceased preachers.)

Name.....
Date..... Address.....

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase."

"So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."—Proverbs 3 : 9, 10.

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